

PLAYSTATION 2 PS2

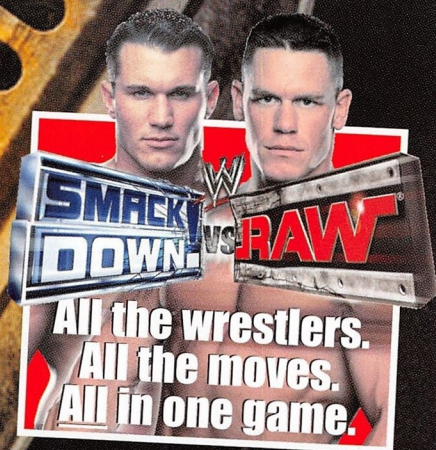


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TONY HAWK'S
UNDERGROUND 2

METAL GEAR SOLID 3

PLAYBOY: THE MANSION

LEISURE SUIT LARRY

VIETCONG: PURPLE HAZE

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2



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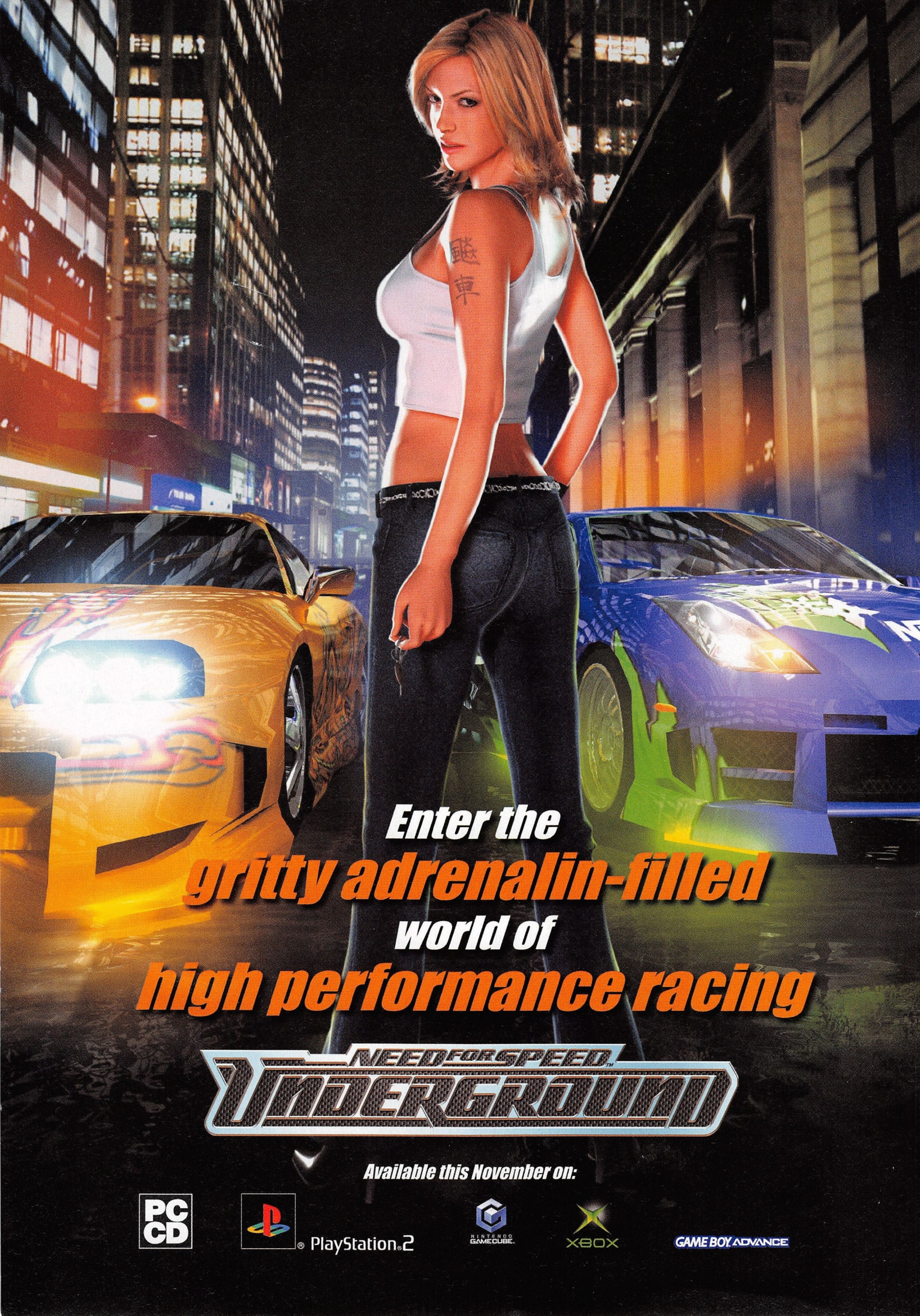


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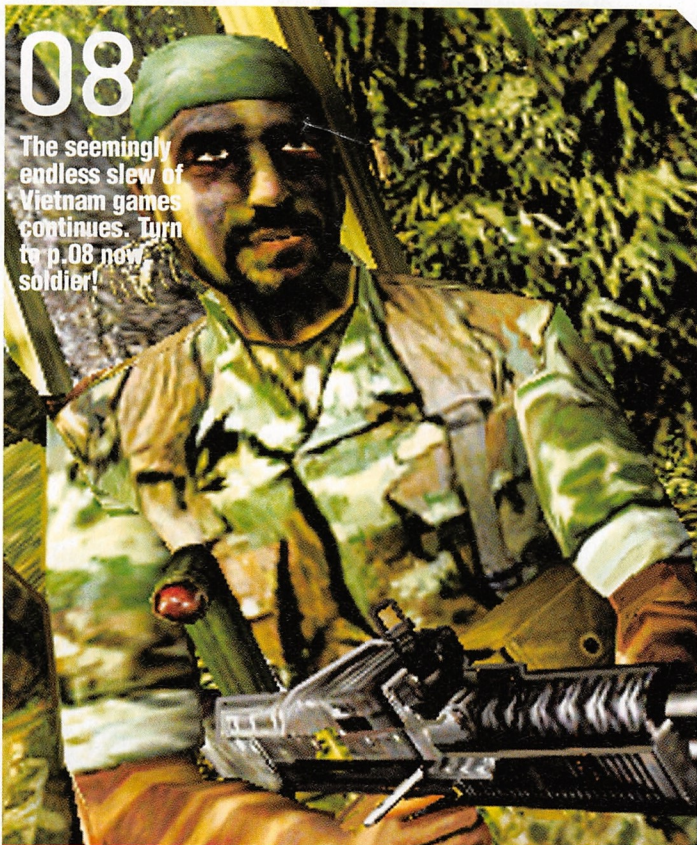


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The seemingly endless slew of Vietnam games continues. Turn to p.08 now, soldier!



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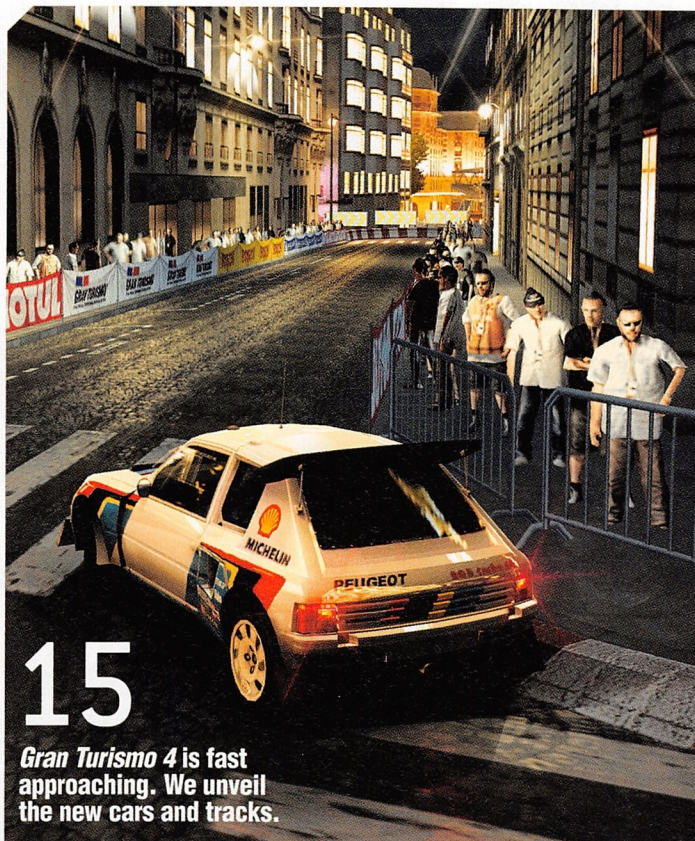
Not actually breaking any games, just cheating at them.

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...and do in *WWE Smackdown! HCTP*. Including how to make mutants and virtual wives.

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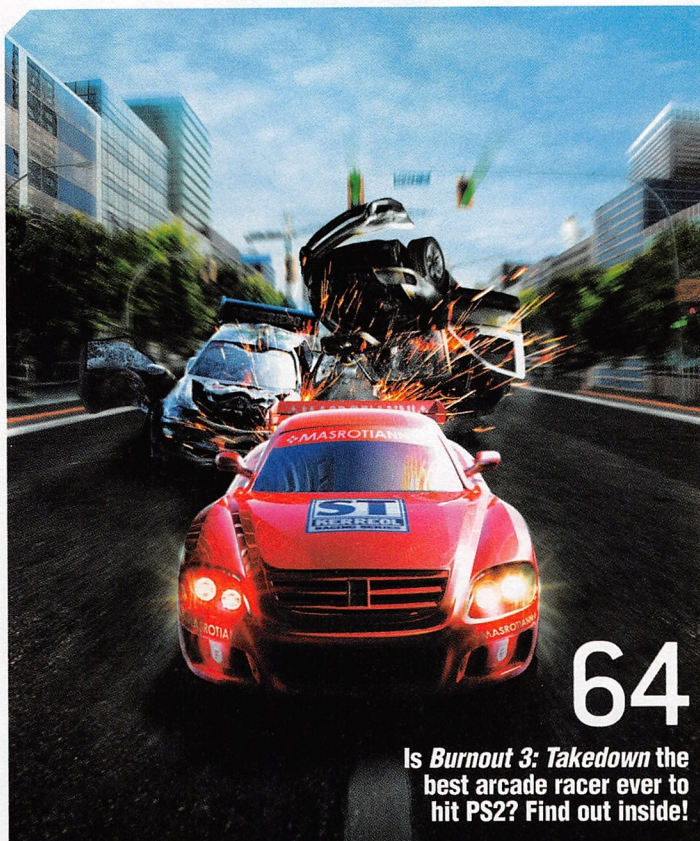
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Be the bad guys in EA's followup to one of the best games ever made.

40 Ban Sick Filth!

Join our moral crit to ride the world's grot one game at a time.





64

Is *Burnout 3: Takedown* the best arcade racer ever to hit PS2? Find out inside!

Reviews

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A game so fast, you'll finish it before you've even bought it.

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A giant woman's face, pulsing walls and limbless horrors baying for blood. The horror continues.

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It's a bit like *Second Sight*. D'oh! We should've seen that one coming...

82 *Crimson Seas 2*

Kind of like *Aliens* and kind of like *Akira*... but nowhere near as good as either. It's still pretty fun, though.

83 *Catwoman*

Could this be the worst movie-to-game tie-in ever made? Here's a super secret clue to help you guess: yes. Yes it is.



Need For Speed Underground 2 is bigger, faster and free roaming. See it here first!

DVD

WWE Smackdown! Vs Raw

See awesome new fight footage!

Lord of the Rings: The Third Age

Massive first look at EA's next Middle Earth epic.

Timesplitters: Future Perfect

Take a look at this fantastic new shooter in action.

Def Jam Fight For NY

Skull-cracking in-game violence from NYC's finest.

Burnout 3: Takedown

The world's fastest racer fully exposed.

Need For Speed Underground 2

Decide for yourself whether it looks as good as *Burnout 3: Takedown*. Watch them one after another. Go on!

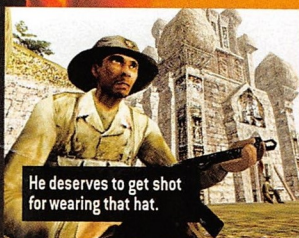
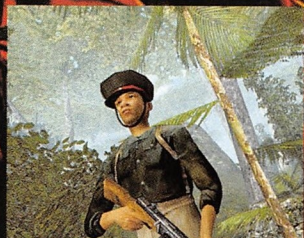


GLOBAL

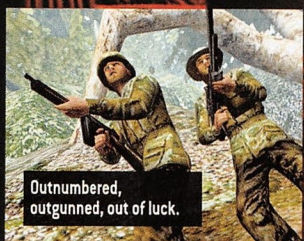
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All the new that's fit to go mental about.



He deserves to get shot
for wearing that hat.



Outnumbered,
outgunned, out of luck.

KING 'CONG

WHAM, BAM! THANK YOU 'NAM!

The controversial conflict spawns another PS2 shooter, *Vietcong: Purple Haze*.

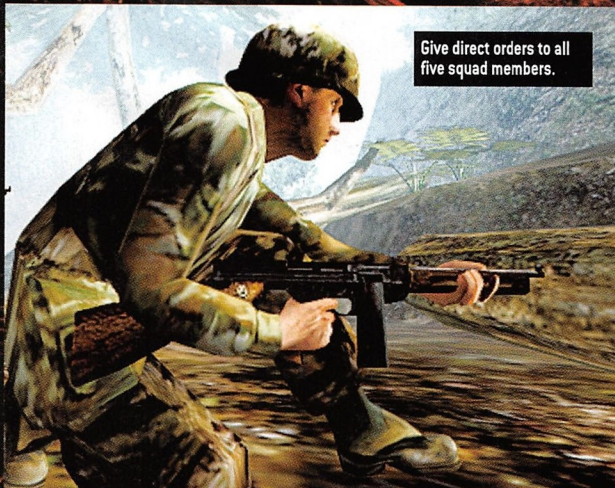
Vietcong: Purple Haze combines both the landmark PC game and its prequel mission pack, *Fist Alpha*, to form yet another Vietnam war game for PS2. It'll arrive just one month after the chronically delayed *Shellshock: Nam '67*.

You control Sergeant Steve Hawkins and must lead five squad-mates through 28 grueling missions. Here you actually give direct orders to the quintet depending on the situation: the pointman seeks out booby traps and hidden enemies, the medic restores health, the machine gunner carries the most firepower, the engineer disarms explosives and dishes out

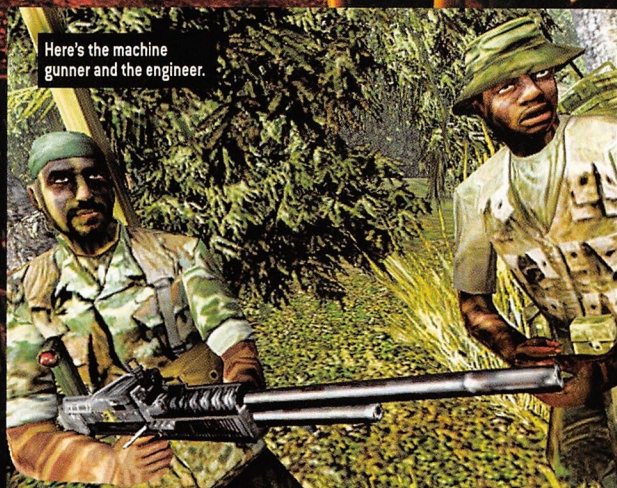
spare ammo, and the radioman can call in artillery and air strikes.

Vietcong: Purple Haze looks certain to push the boundaries of taste by packing in plenty of gore and swearing, including a potty-mouthed drill sergeant who's seen *Full Metal Jacket* one too many times. There's also a base camp that you visit between missions. Here you can swot up on missions and listen to 70s tunes from the likes of Deep Purple and Iggy Pop to recreate the grim feeling of a young recruit thrust into an unwinnable war.

Vietcong: Purple Haze is set to be a serious contender to both *Shellshock: Nam '67* and *Conflict: Vietnam* when it's unleashed this October.



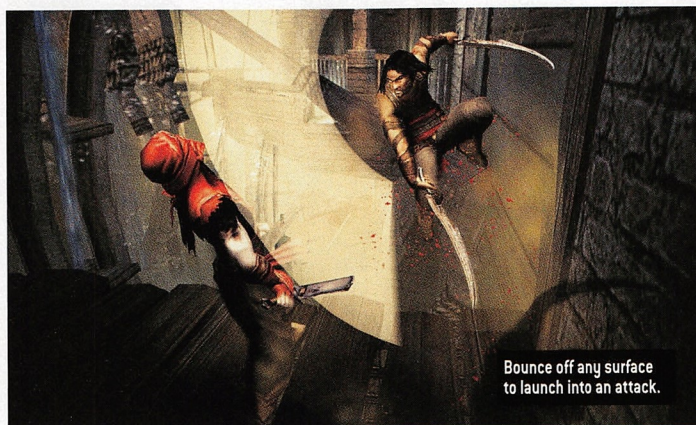
Give direct orders to all
five squad members.



Here's the machine
gunner and the engineer.

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- 10 Oddworld: Stranger
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- 14 Metal Gear Solid 3
- 16 Gran Turismo 4

GOLDENEYE ROGUE AGENT™



Bounce off any surface to launch into an attack.



No wonder he can't hear anything wearing that.



Now might be a good time to re-re-rewind.

SWING INTO ACTION

PRINCE HARMING

Prince of Persia 2 to include a new-and-improved fighting system.

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2 IS TO GET A LARGE SCALE OVERHAUL OF the combat system for its upcoming PlayStation2 release. It'll now be possible to develop your own unique fighting style using the Prince's greatly improved time-travel abilities to further enhance your chances of walking away from a scrap with a full set of limbs. The sequel will have a slightly darker, more mature tone than the first game, and improves massively on the already stunning graphics with some incredible visual effects and trickery. The Prince has never looked better.

The story has our very favourite royal heir on the run from a seemingly invincible foe – known as The Dakaka – who has been charged with ensuring that this time around our hero actually turns up for his date with destiny. As well as fighting off his fearsome new opponent, the Prince must also battle the people of Persia, who mistake his agitated state for the first signs of madness. Stick with your favourite uncle *PSW* for the exclusive first play, plus astonishing first DVD footage next month. You will be amazed.



Radioman Defort calls in artillery and air strikes.



He's the pointman. No wonder he's bricking it.



It'll take a bigger weapon to blow up that beast.



There's only one winner in this collision.



Hijack any vehicle then take another unawares.

MONEY TALKS

KOREA OPPORTUNITIES

Bring North Korea to its knees in *Mercenaries*.

MERCENARIES, A "FREE-FORM" combat title set in North Korea, is continuing to turn heads worldwide as its development gathers pace. This exceptionally promising third-person shooter opens in the near future in the immediate aftermath of a violent revolution. Controlling any one of three bounty hunters (either an American ex-spy, a British secret agent or a highly-trained Swede), you must attempt to bring peace to the region by tracking down and killing the 52 members of the newly installed hardline regime. The higher the ranking of each of the 52 you find, the more dangerous it is to bring them down.

The path you take through the game depends almost entirely on which of the three international factions you decide to ally yourself to: the Russian

mafia, the Chinese mafia or the North Korean mafia. The group you select or double-cross will then be on hand to supply you with weaponry, explosives and vehicles for the duration of your campaign in return for lumps of cash you've earned out on the battlefield.

This ensures that *Mercenaries* is a truly open-ended action title, like *Grand Theft Auto* but with military tanks and choppers.

We'll be lifting the lid even further on *Mercenaries* next month, so keep it *PSW*.



PSW'S 10 MOST WANTED



1. BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

Our collision with *Burnout 3* was a very serious one. So serious, in fact, that we're still trapped inside the rubble, our face melted to the steering wheel. And we couldn't be happier.

2. GTA: SAN ANDREAS

The early 90s were unkind; a time of stillborn romance, torturous poetry and oversized Ned's Atomic Dustbin t-shirts. Second time around, with *San Andreas*, it should be a little more fun.

3. TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT

We spent eight hours on a plane this month, trapped in the window seat behind a snoozing wall of lightly sweating blubber, just to play this. Luckily, it was worth every second.

4. GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

First impression: it's going to be amazing. Second thoughts: perhaps it's not. Third time lucky: it is going to be amazing after all. Hopefully this'll be the last time we'll change our mind.

5. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

Our first meeting with *Pro Evo 4* will be at the GameStars show in September and we've already started planning what we're going to wear. What do you think: the satin two-piece or the mumu?

6. STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

The rejuvenation of the *Star Wars* brand continues apace. At this rate, we'll have all forgotten about how bad *Attack of the Clones* was just in time for the sixth and final instalment.

7. TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2

Expect to see the second *Underground* title finish the cosmetic surgery that the original game started. Just promise us that you'll never forget where you saw it first (clue: here).

8. TEKKEN 5

Looks to have lungs capable of blowing away all the cobwebs and layers of dust that have gathered over the *Tekken* series in the years since part four. Which is a blessed relief.

9. KILLZONE

Are we nearly there yet? What about now? Now? Okay then... now? Or now? And how about now? Are. We. Nearly. There. Yet? now? Now? Now? Now?

10. DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY

The biggest names in Hip-Hop stomp on each others' genitals, only to find that their peanut-size testicles were removed at birth. Which explains a lot.



TRASH TALKING

SPEAKEASY WITH PS2

EyeToy: Chat sets tongues wagging and eyes fluttering.

EyeToy: Chat will become the world's first console videophone when released later this month, allowing two people anywhere in the world to see each other while talking.

As well as two-way chat you'll be able to send a 30-second video mail, or enter the chat rooms and have a natter via text or audio. Text chat rooms will support 256 people at once while voice chat rooms will support 16 at once. Chess, draughts and a version of *Battleships* called *Naval War* are also playable using the video chat service.

Fearful parents can set parameters before letting their young ones loose. It doesn't look like there's any need to worry though: video chat needs two-way

approval to begin, video mail can only be sent to someone in your address book, chat room topics and messages are moderated by Sony, and you can see who Timmy's been calling and for how long. So no worries in the freak department, then.

Apart from the dull video chat games, *EyeToy: Chat* should take off big time and there are already plans to incorporate it into other Sony games. PSW can reveal that *This is Football 2006* is the first of many Sony games expected to support the technology – even though the 2005 version isn't out yet!



WEIRD RETURNS

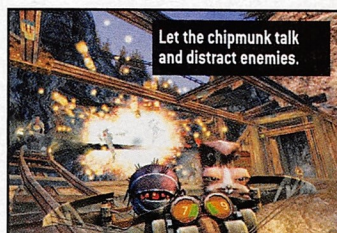
HELLO, STRANGER

Oddworld Stranger to bring spooky weird things to PS2.

AFTER CREATING THE BRILLIANT ABE'S *Oddyssey* series on PSone, *Oddworld* were sucked in by Microsoft and set their sights on Xbox but, having seen the error of their ways, *Oddworld* is returning to PS2 with *Oddworld Stranger*.

Set in the *Oddworld* universe, you take on the role of a hairy bounty hunter called Stranger and traverse the *Oddworld* wild west in search of criminals. As in all *Oddworld* games there are no humans, only weird creatures. The local inhabitants

of the giant western themed town are chickens called Clakkerz while Stranger uses talking chipmunks, bees and slugs as projectiles in his crossbow. Flipping from first and third person perspectives, Stranger can stealth his way around levels or get on all fours and speed around the huge levels at 55mph. *Oddworld Stranger* is the most original game we've seen this year but, sadly, we're not going to see it until Spring 2005.



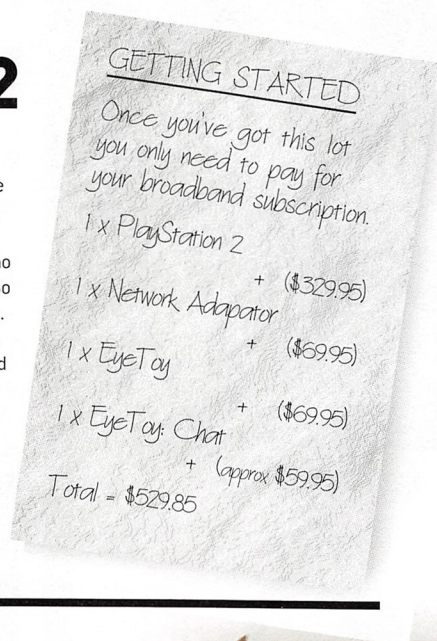
Let the chipmunk talk and distract enemies.



Hey Chief Chicken. I'm the new boy in town.



The Clakkerz go mental if they see you kill.



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 PlayStation 2

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GLOBALINSIDER

SWEET GUFFS FROM THE ARSE-END OF NEWS



MIAMI MICE

Can you smell the cash-in? Riding on the fast passing tide of 80s nostalgia, *Miami Vice* is a third-person adventure starring Crockett and Tubbs as they battle to stop a drugs cartel from, well, from cartelling drugs. Expect poor controls and sloppy collision detection.

SOON RAIDER?

Although Eidos is staying quiet about a release date for the seventh *Tomb Raider* game [and well they might after number six], the makers of the *Tomb Raider* comic have been considerably looser-lipped. Top Cow has recently stated in an interview that it's winding down the comic in order to stage a game tie-in re-launch next summer. You heard it here first.

OH, AND LET'S NOT FORGET THIS...

Actually, while we're speaking of *Tomb Raider*, we've heard rumours that legendary *Deus Ex* designer Warren Spector has left Ion Storm and is now working with Crystal Dynamics on the next game to star the world's busiest archaeologist. If this is true, then the next *Tomb Raider* game will likely be the best game ever made. Ever.

TERRIFYING GUFF

Perhaps the next best thing to domestic violence, *Dark Wind* is a first person fighting game using the Gametrack motion sensor device to translate your real-world punches into the game. Enemies mostly consist of big-breasted women, an excellent choice, we're sure you'll agree. Looks like all that practice down the pub drinking the old wife-beater juice might come in handy after all. We're kidding, of course.



WHEN IN ROME...

ROME, SWEET ROME

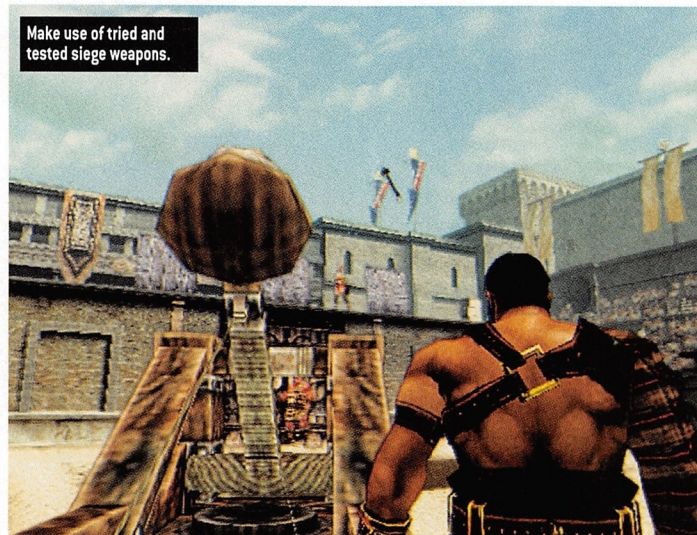
Capcom heads back to the reign of Caesar for *Shadow of Rome*.

COMFORTABLY THE MOST INTRIGUING PROPOSITION OF THE month, *Shadow of Rome* is the latest title from the man responsible for the *Onimusha* series. It begins in 44BC in the immediate aftermath of the death of Julius Caesar and revolves around the attempts of a young gladiator to uncover the truth behind his assassination.

The gameplay in *Shadow of Rome* is divided into two distinct chunks: action and stealth. For the action sections you'll be in command of Agrippa; a muscled warrior fighting to clear his father's name. In the stealth bits you'll play as Octavius; a

physically weaker character who must tap his plentiful reserve of guile if he's to stand any chance at all of sneaking past the legions and legions of Roman centurions patrolling the route that leads to the gates of his final goal.

How well you perform in each of these sections determines the course you take through the game. Those who excel as Agrippa will find the later levels to be more action-oriented, and vice versa. It's very early days, but we've already seen enough of *Shadow of Rome* to know that you have every reason to be getting excited. Keep it PSW for more over the coming months.



Make use of tried and tested siege weapons.



A warning to all to get piles treated early.



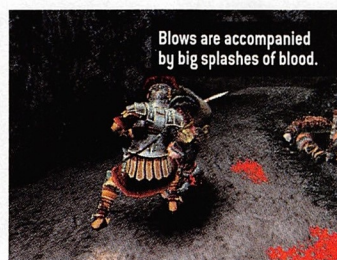
Skewer him in place and bask in the glory.



You can use limbs and heads as weapons.

TUMBLE & FUMBLE

TOTAL 889 SCORE



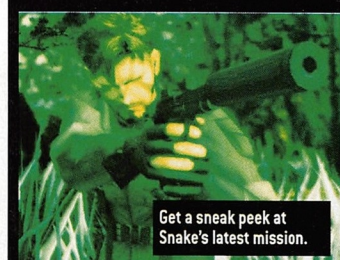
Blows are accompanied by big splashes of blood.



Hacking a limb off is kind of disarming we suppose.

DISARMED

TOTAL 424 SCORE



Get a sneak peek at Snake's latest mission.



There'll be a proper Pro Evo 4 tournament.

NOT JUST A GAME

GAME STARS 2004

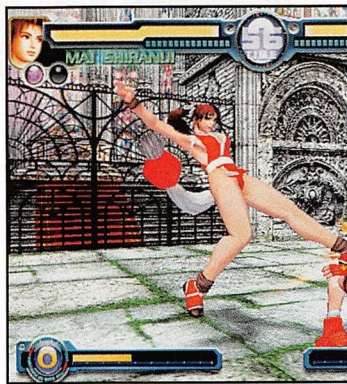
Repeat after us, "Oh my God! It's full of stars!"

VISITORS TO THIS YEAR'S GAME STARS

exhibition will be among the first games-players in the universe to sample the delights of *Pro Evolution Soccer 4*, *Prince of Persia 2* and *Metal Gear Solid 3*, it has been revealed this month. The show, to be held at the ExCel centre at London's Docklands from the 1st of September to the 5th, is also to feature the latest titles from Electronic Arts, Acclaim, Atari, Activision and Eidos.

Loosely based around the popular British TV show of the same name, the exhibition centres on a number of competitive gaming events to be staged

over the course of the five days, including the final of the European Online Gaming Championships. In addition, players will be able to suck up the latest hints and tips in the Cheat Zone, step back into gaming's block-addled past in the Retro Zone and take part in a series of challenges over in the Bear Pit. For additional information, point your internet browser in the direction of www.gamestars.co.uk. Tickets are available now and are priced at £10 in advance or £12 on the door. Book early to avoid disappointment. As for us, we'll see you down there.



GLOVES ARE OFF

HAIL TO THE KING

King of Fighters: Maximum Impact set for PAL release

SNK HAS FINALLY CONFIRMED THAT IT is to grant *Maximum Impact*, the original *King of Fighters* game for PlayStation2, an official release in PAL territories.

Though traditionally very popular in the Far East, the *King of Fighters* games have never enjoyed quite the same level of popularity in the West. All of which is set to change with *Maximum Impact*, largely

thanks to the timely shift from two-dimensions into three.

From what we've seen of it thusfar, hardcore fans of the series have nothing to fear when it comes to this shift in perspective. For while, graphically at least, *Maximum Impact* exists on a higher plane to previous *King of Fighters* titles, in terms of gameplay it's almost exactly the same.

The 20-strong stable of fighters includes all of the [semi] famous faces from the original – Terry Bogard and Kyo Kusanagi to name but two – along with a small sprinkling of new characters. As to what shape these newcomers will take, only time will tell, SNK being keen to play its cards close to its chest in the build up to the game's eventual release.

ONLINE CARNAGE

BURN VICTIM

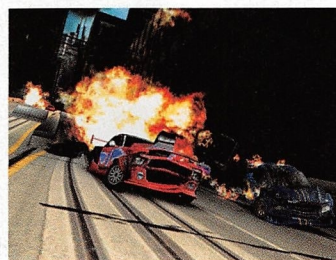
Crash 'n' Burn aims for the scalp of *Burnout 3*.

IN AN EFFORT TO CLIP THE HEELS OF *Burnout 3: Takedown*, Eidos has announced the imminent arrival of *Crash 'n' Burn*, an arcade racer high on petrol fumes in which the general idea is to survive long enough to claim the chequered flag. This is nowhere near as easy as it might sound, we should add. For just as you can ram your rivals off the road, causing them to fireball into the roadside barriers for an appointment with Horrible Death, so your opponents can do exactly the same to you. The last driver on four wheels wins, forcing you to keep your wits about you at all times.

Crash 'n' Burn's real claim to fame is that it's to be the first PlayStation2 title in the history of the broadband adapter to offer a

16-way multiplayer mode. Online-enabled gamers will be able to play any of the available game modes over the net, whether it be straight Race, Kamikaze, Bomb Tag or Last Man Standing.

Unfortunately, the list of vehicles is nowhere near as generous as the list of modes, offering you the choice between just four different styles of motor: pick-up truck, muscle car, hatchback and sports coupe. At least you'll be given a free rein to customise your motor to suit your tastes. Paint jobs can be applied, spoilers can be added (presumably only to be spoilt properly at a later date) and rims can be upgraded. Expect to see the internet come crashing to a halt in Autumn of this year.



We reckon this might be the Kamikaze mode.



Well, you can't say that it doesn't look spectacular.



She could crush you to death with those...

GOLDENEYE
ROGUE AGENT

GLOBAL INSIDER

MORE BITE-SIZED THAN A KELLOGGS FACTORY



METAL SLUG 3D

News reaches our special operatives that the *Metal Slug* series of classic arcade blasters will be making the long overdue leap into 3D. Publisher Playmore is reportedly working on a modernised version of the games to sit alongside its new 3D *King of Fighters* games. For a company so staunchly 2D, seeing its major franchise slip into 3D marks the end of an era. Sniffle.

WAR IS HELL

World War II returns with a bang in *Call of Duty: Finest Hour*. This shooter, from ex-members of the *Medal of Honor* team, promises to offer incredible variety, with locations from Africa to Belgium and missions featuring everything from stealth to sniping via all out offence. But do you get to fight an evil zombie Hitler in a giant robot suit? Time will tell.

PLAYSTATION SEE

Images from a recent Sony conference indicate that the PlayStation 3 will be emerging from under the covers some time later this year. Reports had previously indicated that the machine would be unveiled at the 2005 E3 show in L.A., but slides shown at the Sony shindig showed the machine premiering this year. We'll believe it when we see it, and when we see it we'll publicly wet ourselves. Don't worry if you're still hugely attached to your PS2. Sony has also said there's at least another two years in the old dog yet. Phew.

AREA 51

As each new image of Midway's hot and sexy looking shooter reaches our special news eye, we seem to get further and further away from a release date. The sci-fi shooter, set in the base that allegedly doubles as a hub for experiments on aliens, has now been pushed back until next year in order to make sure it's just as gorgeous as possible come release.



GLOBAL | EXTRA

ALL THE LATEST ON THE BIGGEST PLAYSTATION2 GAMES ON YOUR SHORT-RANGE RADAR.



Ladies Day at Royal Ascot was getting silly.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

SNAKE uncovers even more jungle peril in the form of crocodiles, swamps and killer bees! Who'd be a covert agent, eh?

> PUBLISHER	KONAMI
> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> OUT	DECEMBER

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT SNAKE COULDN'T GO ANY DEEPER

into the jungle, these new screens show even more scenes of terror, danger and death. We've established that Snake fancies himself as a bit of a skydiving master, but the jungle itself looks more dangerous than jumping out of a rickety old military plane. As well as the crocs, Snake has to deal with the fact that rivers can turn into swamps. Swamps will slow Snake down and, should he skip meals and become weak, the murky black stuff will swallow him up completely. Even insects pose a problem for Snake; a swarm of angry bees could do him some real harm, yet even a single bee could be enough to prompt a scream and give away his cover. Thankfully, if you spot a hive above enemy territory, shooting it will cause panic among enemy soldiers and prove the ideal opportunity for some head shots with the new and improved sniper rifle. With only months to go before Snake makes his final curtain call on PS2, you can count on Konami to unveil more than a few surprises during the autumn.



Those cold eyes send a tingle down our spine.



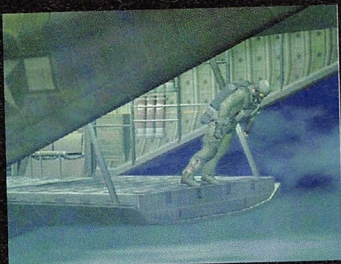
Flying high, Snake avoids radar and gets ready to enter the jungle.



Above cloud level, enemies can't see the giant aircraft.



Is that a US army helmet? Surely that's giving your game away?

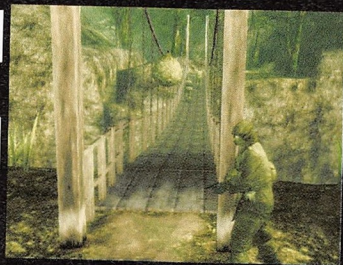


Ready for final launch in three... two... one... GO! GO! GO!



Touchdown! Snake lands in a tree, hanging from his parachute.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3 >>>



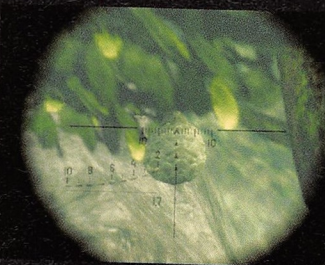
A beehive? In the middle of a bridge? Hmm... Should make things interesting.



A soldier patrols the bridge, with the bees acting as his back up.



A lesser soldier doesn't see the danger lurking only a few feet above his head.



SNAKE takes aim and prepares to unleash havoc in the form of a thousand bees.



A thousand bees swarm inside this poor soldier's pants. Ouch!

METAL GEAR SOLID 3 >>>



SNAKE bravely wades waist-deep into the swamp, keeping an eye out for crocs.



The coast looks clear. No soldiers and no crocs. Time to move on.



SNAKE keeps his pistol at the ready just in case something jumps out at him.



It's deeper here and, hang on, that's a croc! Help! Argh! SNAKE's in trouble.



Tired and out of his depth, SNAKE makes a tasty croc lunch. Game over.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3 >>>

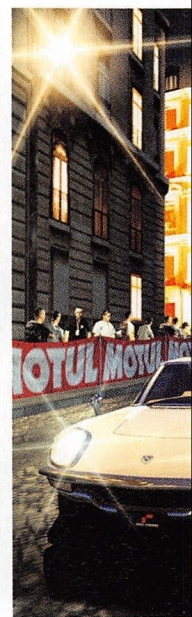
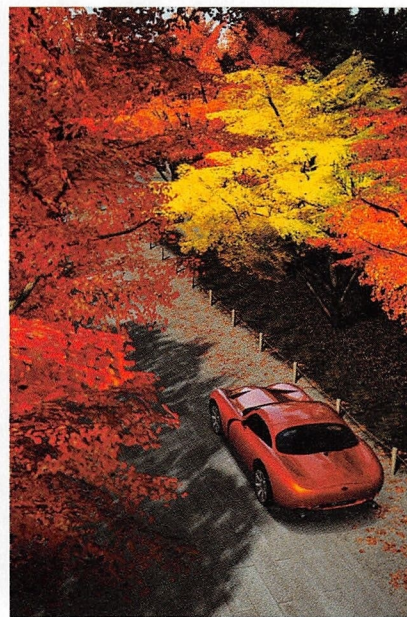
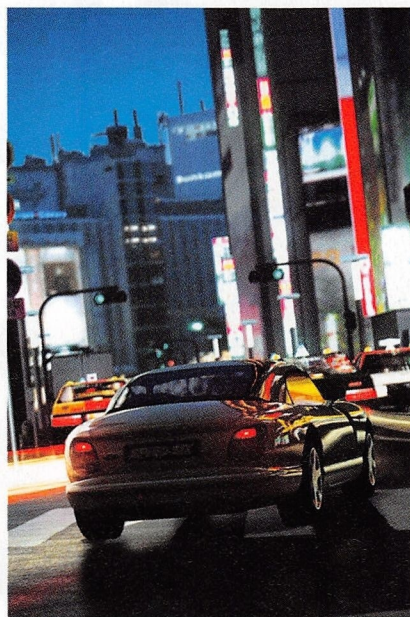
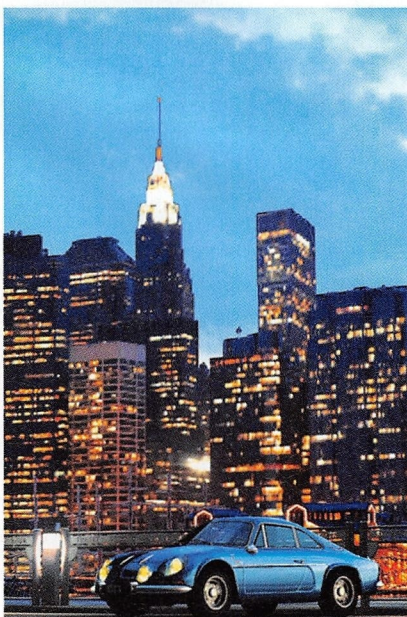
METAL GEAR SOLID 3 >>>

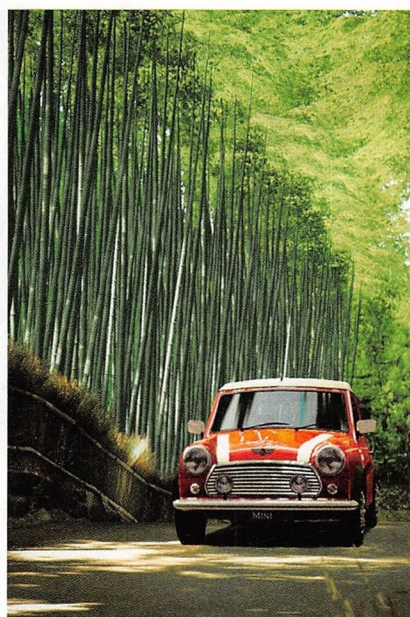
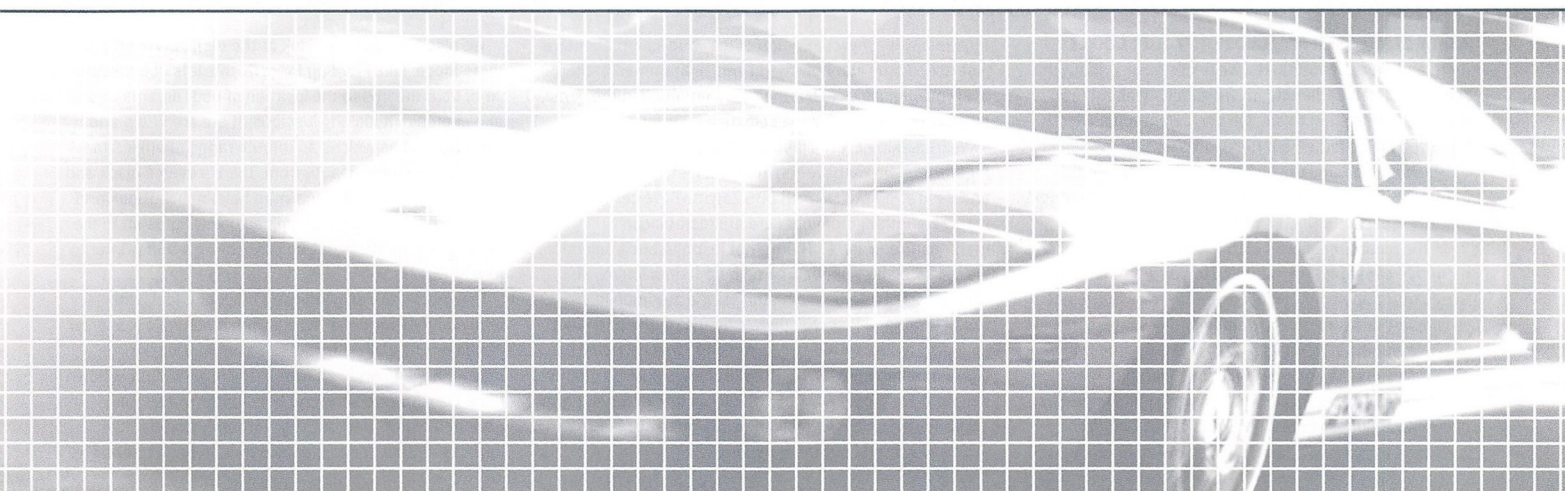
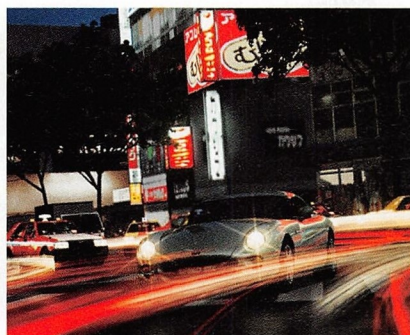
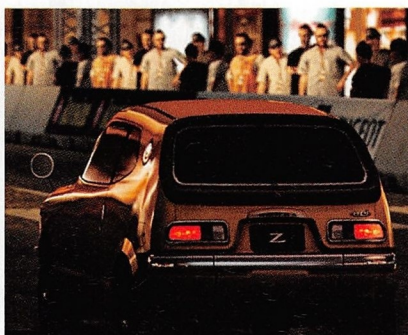
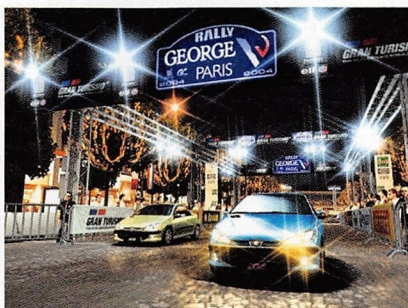
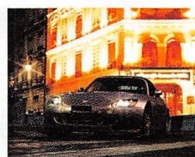


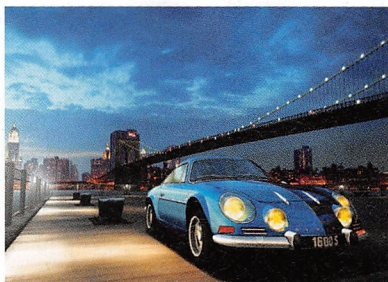
> GENRE	RACING
> DEVELOPER	POLYPHONY DIGITAL
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	YES

GRAN TURISMO 4

It's the game that needs no introduction.







The Celica glides through the mud in beautiful style.

AS IT GETS CLOSER AND CLOSER, IT JUST LOOKS

more and more beautiful. No, we're not talking about the Swedish Extreme Bikini Team we're talking about *Gran Turismo 4*. That's not to say we don't want to talk about the Swedish Extreme Bikini Team, it's just that we don't have millions of amazing new screens of the Swedish Extreme Bikini Team. We're trying to sort that out for next month – keep your fingers crossed...

In the meantime, here's all the latest from Polyphony's definitive car game. We sat down to see what new cars they'd introduced only to discover that even our resident car pervert didn't know the names of half of them. There will be around 500 models in the finished game from manufacturers old and new, including plenty of marques that have long been swallowed up by bigger companies, or simply no longer exist. There's no doubt that *Gran Turismo 4* is going to be massive, so massive it may well

require a whole new definition of the word 'comprehensive' just to describe just how many cars are jammed in there. It's probably easier to list the cars that *aren't* in the game, so sickeningly broad is the selection on offer.

We're talking every classic British sports car ever made for starters. Do we have the insanely fast, rare, beautiful and desirable Aston Martin DB6 Zagatto? We certainly do. Is there anything from obscure aristocratic car-manufacturer Bristol? There's not just one but a selection. We're talking less about a game here than a library of cars; a sort of interactive history of the automobile. Aside from Ferrari and Porsche, there's almost nothing to want for. Admittedly, the absent Ferrari and Porsche would be top of most peoples' wish lists but there's enough on offer here to drive most car maniacs into a state of fervour and excitement that could easily end in a massive, fatal heart attack. Be careful out there people.

We also have our first look at the eerily pornographic Photo mode. Like *Playboy* for cars, this lets you take the car of your dreams to the location of your dreams and take photos of it looking luscious. There are filters and focus options as well as an infinite range of angles to shoot your chosen beauty from. There's even a black and white effect for that Athena 'man holding baby' look and when you're done, you can upload your photos on to the internet or print them out by connecting a USB printer to your PS2.

New tracks are also lining up thick and fast, with details of Paris and the Nurburgring reaching our special games ear, as well as tracks in Shibuya, Brooklyn, Sagano, Nagano and San Marco. The level of detail shown in the tracks we've seen has been nothing less than groundbreaking, with both backgrounds and track surfaces reproduced in insane detail. The city tracks are

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Gran Turismo 4 will be a truly global affair. Don't forget to send your mum a postcard!



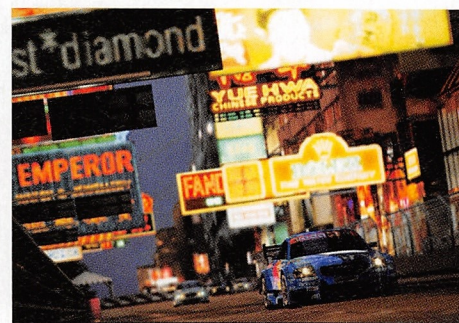
>> GRAND CANYON

A rally track set against the stunning backdrop of the Grand Canyon. Sadly, you can't fly your car off the edge to certain doom but hey, them's the brakes. Breaks. Whatever.



>> BROOKLYN

Set against the Brooklyn Bridge, although maybe not across it, this is another track with some really beautiful scenery, especially when the Manhattan skyline is fully lit-up at night.



>> HONG KONG

Tight roads and plenty of neon signs characterise the Hong Kong track – rather than the killer viruses, kung fu prostitutes and undead super-soldiers we'd been hoping for.



The Renault Alpine is a long way from home.

“IT’S PROBABLY EASIER TO LIST THE CARS THAT AREN’T IN THE GAME.”

bathed in neon lights and given a claustrophobic feel with narrow roads lined by towering skyscrapers.

Then there are the people. What were just cardboard cut-outs before are now fully modelled, three dimensional figures. With around a billion of these chaps looking on in every race, the overall effect should be nothing less than genuine crowd-pleasing brilliance.

With 50 tracks planned for the finished game, alongside

500 cars, we can’t help but think that this is going to totally redefine not just what we expect from driving games, but what we expect from games in general. It’s a monstrous behemoth of a game, the size of Godzilla but as perfectly detailed, subtle and beautiful as a butterfly. Sort of like Mothra, then.

All that’s left to see is if the same loving care and attention seen in these screens has been lavished on the

gameplay. While we’re utterly sure that it will look and drive superbly, *Gran Turismo* games have never been known for their well-engineered Career mode. Hopefully, *Gran Turismo 4* will finally rectify this and show us a progression system beyond the dull, limited systems of the past. Oh, and if they got rid of the two-hour long races with random prizes, that would also please us greatly. If they haven’t, we’re flying to Japan to slash their tyres.

FIRST OPINIONS

It’s been a long time coming and it’s not even here yet, but we’re more excited about this than ever. With so much to do, so many cars and so many tracks, there’s no doubt that this will be the greatest driving simulator ever when it bursts onto the shelves. All we need to see now is a great game structure and we’re sold.

// MARK SORRELL



>> NANZENJI

A beautiful part of Japan, so expect glorious autumnal shades, cherry blossom, distant mountains and all that sort of thing. Racing round Habitat basically.



>> CITTA DI ARIA

We’re only too familiar with the wonderful Italian hilltop drive through a picturesque village. A firm favourite already, having more cars to drive round the track will be extra brilliant.



>> COSTA DI AMALFI

An Italian coastal track that winds its way past white villas atop the cliffs, as the sea pounds the rocks below. The perfect opportunity for a quick spin in a convertible, then.

PREVIEW

GRAN TURISMO 4

>> Depth of field

The depth of this screen is incredible. It takes 30 seconds to drive that far in a 200mph car. Wow!

>> Presented by...

Advertising billboards are all present and correct. We wonder if they had to pay extra.

>> Skyscraping

There's a claustrophobic feel at street level with huge buildings looming up all around you.

>> All American

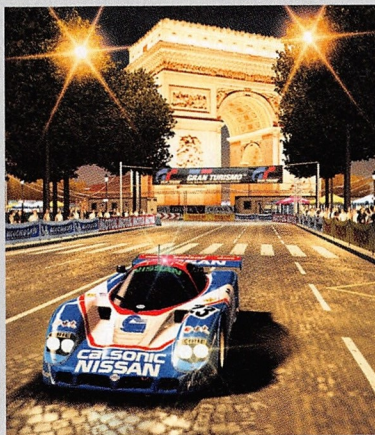
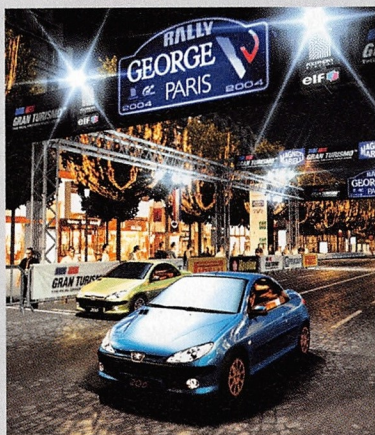
The cars in this race are all American supercars, including the new Ford GT-40 and the Saleen S7.

>> Where's Wally?

The previously 2D spectators will all be fully rendered in the finished game.

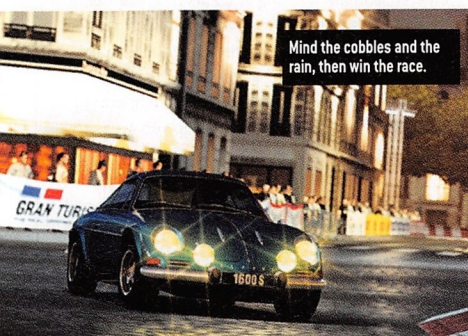
>> Round the Bend

This panoramic shot shows the track leading up to a bend before straightening up.

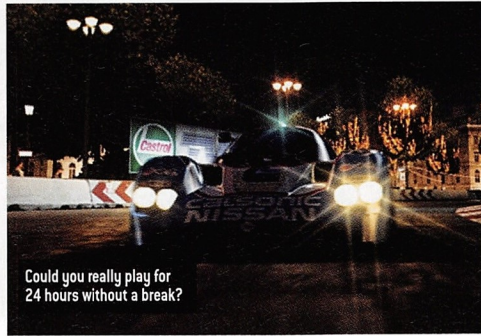


FRENCH FANCY

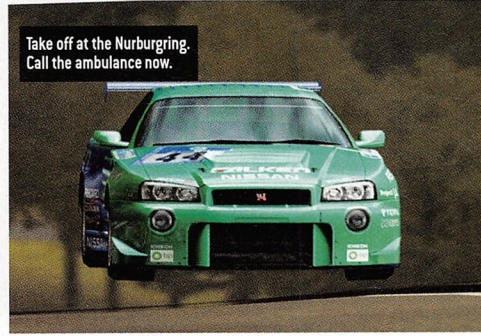
Paris is especially impressive. Imagine the tight, winding cobbled back streets, the long and broad tree-lined avenues, then stir in a hugely high-speed roundabout known as the Arc de Triomphe before darting back into the boulevards. It'll be like that mad *C'était un Rendezvous* film, except without the Ferrari. Or the Traffic.



Mind the cobbles and the rain, then win the race.



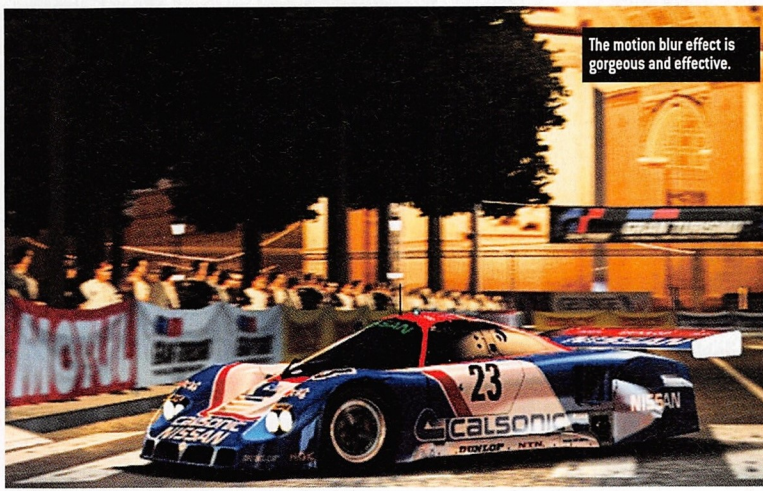
Could you really play for 24 hours without a break?



Take off at the Nurburgring. Call the ambulance now.



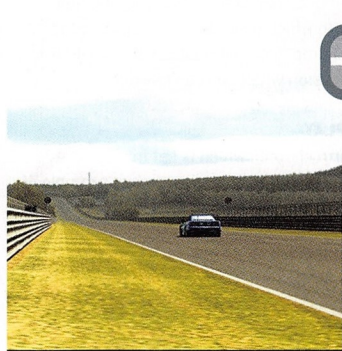
Even the trackside huts are accurately rendered.



The motion blur effect is gorgeous and effective.

LORD OF THE RINGS

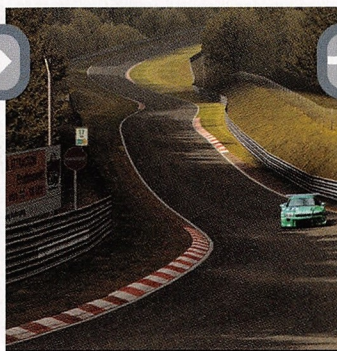
Soon, the legendary Nurburgring will be making its *Gran Turismo* debut. We take in a quick lap of the original 17-mile, 200-corner monster track.



The main straight allows for incredible speeds, with cars capable of 200mph plus easily able to reach their top speed.



Ease through the banked Carosel, using the camber of the corner to take the corner fast and leave quickly.



This hump in the track can be incredibly dangerous, launching unsuspecting cars into the air at well over 100mph.



This series of bends ends in an uphill corner taken blind, at full speed. Truly a test of courage and skill, it can be deadly.



> GANG OF THREE

The three playable characters all boast unique abilities for you to play about with.

“BEING ABLE TO SWITCH BETWEEN CHARACTERS ADDS DEPTH.”

FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE

The team behind *The Two Towers* game ups the hack and slash ante, but can *Forgotten Realms* linger long in the memory without Frodo and Co.?

> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	STORMFRONT STUDIOS
> PUBLISHER	ATARI
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

THREE HEROES TEAM UP TO SAVE THE WORLD

from an evil lord who's risen again. Being of different races they're a mismatched team, but over the course of the quest they put aside their prejudices and fight together for the greater good. Chuck in an army of orcs and some trolls and you have a virtual sequel to *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King* action adventure games – without the megabucks licence, but just as many Scrabble-friendly names and places.

Forgotten Realms could turn out to be a better game than the official *LOTR* titles. The biggest gameplay advancement is being able to switch between the trio at will, which adds depth to the otherwise linear hacking and slashing. Rannek the fighter is the main man for holding off groups of enemies; Illius the sorcerer's ten spells make him ideal for picking off enemies with ranged attacks; and Zhai the rogue remains temporarily invisible after emerging from shadowed areas to inflict one-hit 'stealth' kills.

There's no doubt you'll take the skin off your thumb from hitting X and O repeatedly, but to call it button-bashing doesn't do justice to what is, at times, very intricate group combat. Fill up a character's hero meter and you can pull off a powerful 'super attack' with the press of a button. Hold off until all three characters' meters are maxed-out and a 'group super attack' that'll wipe out all nearby enemies becomes available. Alternatively, you can summon a character to lend a helping hand in 'bullet-time', which doesn't take quite so much off the hero meter as a super attack, yet is very useful when battling bosses.

The trio also share four combos so you don't need to memorise too many moves. The 'knockback' attack is the easiest way to dispatch enemies, either sending them plummeting to their deaths, or shoving them into one of the many deathtraps that lurk in the background such as forges, grinders and even axe-wielding statues that come to life. The knockdown move puts enemies on the floor before dealing a fatal blow or stab. Double damage does exactly that.

Once you master these and get the hang of constantly switching characters there's a great flow to *Forgotten Realms*. With so many enemies on screen at once and lots of scripted events it's impossible to solve every problem and counter everything the game throws at you immediately. Instead you have to prioritise, which means each hero gets his or her turn in the spotlight without the game ever contriving to separate the team or focus on one character for too long. The first chapter in which the characters are introduced one at a time into the middle of an orc war is the only occasion when you can't switch.

ROLE PLAY

The fourth chapter, which is set in a wizard's tower that's under siege, is a perfect example of how to use each character's strengths. Should you direct Rannek to hack down ladders that appear outside windows to prevent enemy reinforcements scaling the walls? What about Illius who can cast 'protection' spells on your party or 'hold' spells that freeze enemies? Or do you head straight for the nearest exit by using Zhai, the only character who can jump, to leap over a series of flames and activate the magic door mechanism? The answer is all three, since characters not under your control are very capable of looking after themselves until you're



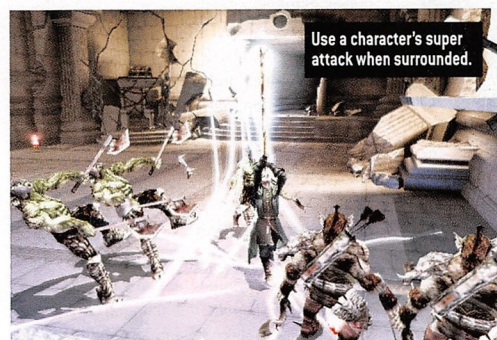
Drizzt gets to work on the dirty troll scum.



Plunge your flaming blade into their bellies.



Better get a move on before the sword cools.



Use a character's super attack when surrounded.



Yuan-Ti abominations have a long reach.



Fortunately this iron golem is on your side.



'Look before you leap' is what springs to mind.

HERO WORSHIP

A closer look at the three main heroes and special guest star.

>> Rannek

Seeking revenge after trolls razed his home.
SKILLS: Fierce fighter with expert swordplay and great strength.



>> Illius

The black sheep in his family of warrior knights.
SKILLS: Ranged magic, but can also batter enemies with his staff.



>> Zhai

Mysterious half Wood Elf and half Drow.
SKILLS: Stealth, the ability to jump and limited throwing knives.



>> Drizzt

Replaces Illius as a playable character.
Skills: Almost as hard as Rannek thanks to his two swords.



"COULD BE BETTER THAN THE OFFICIAL LOTR GAMES."

FORGOTTEN REALMS **FACT!**

> **FROM THE MAKERS OF...**
The game's being developed by Stormfront Studios. The same team behind the LOTR games.

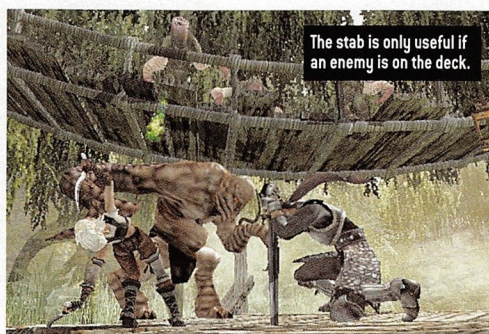
> **STARRING...**
Star voiceovers come from Patrick Stewart of *Star Trek* fame and Michael Clarke Duncan of *Green Mile* fame.

> **WRITTEN BY...**
R. A. Salvatore – the pen behind the top-selling *Forgotten Realms* novels – is charged with devising the story.

> **PLOT SPOILER**
The gang becomes embroiled in an age-old conflict between two warring demonic armies. Sounds like fun.



“BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED
THROUGHOUT. THE CHARACTERS’
FACES ARE VERY DETAILED.”



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

“THE REALISTIC ON-THE-FLY CHARACTER SWITCHING DESIGN WILL CHALLENGE PLAYERS WITH INNOVATIVE AND COMPELLING ENCOUNTERS. PLAYERS WILL BE CONTINUALLY TASKED WITH CHOOSING THE BEST CHARACTER FOR EACH CHALLENGE”

ready to take over again. They won't complete any of the puzzle elements of course, but you don't need to baby-sit them either.

One of the most popular *Forgotten Realms* inhabitants is the renegade dark elf Drizzt Do'Urden. So popular, in fact, that fans have set up websites dedicated to their love of him. We're not kidding. He replaces Illius as a playable character in chapter seven, which sees your party defending the dwarven dwelling of Mithral Hall against a troll clan. There's a neat twist in that the only way to kill the trolls is with fire, so as well as protecting various entrances to the hall you must keep dipping your blade in any nearby flames. You'll often find that even the hack 'em up levels aren't as straightforward as they seem.

MAGIC MARKER

After every chapter you can spend the team's shared pool of experience points and gold on new abilities and an exhaustive list of items that runs to over 50 per character. There's an auto-buy option for those who can't be arsed to trawl through page after page of magic potions, boots and rings, though those who are partial to a spot of *Dungeons & Dragons* will find they can do a better job. Items and skills are sometimes earned after beating the six bosses too: upon defeating an orc king at the end of the second chapter Rannek gains a new attack where he pounds his fist into the ground, Illius is given magic mines and Zhai gains her jump ability. A neat touch is that whatever you buy or gain is then seen on the characters in subsequent cut-scenes and during gameplay itself.

The game is beautifully presented throughout. The characters' clothing and faces are very detailed and the hand-drawn lip-synching and animation looks mightily impressive. Voice acting is uniformly good, with a touch of class provided by Patrick Stewart and Michael Clarke Duncan.

BORED OF THE RINGS

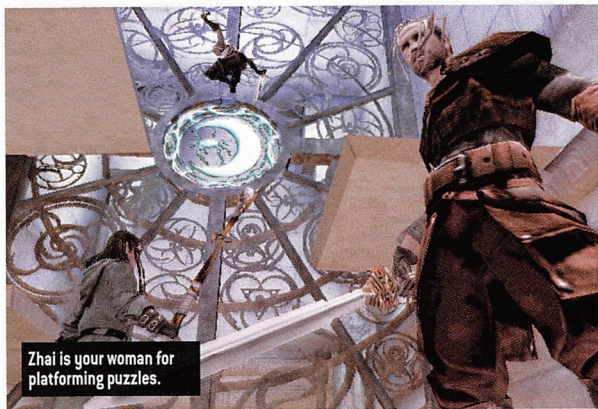
Gripes are few. If you've seen *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy or played the two games then some levels will feel familiar. In particular the Mines of Moria, Helm's Deep and The Black Gate set-pieces are given another airing under the guise of the *Forgotten Realms* setting. And despite the perfect set-up for a cooperative multiplayer mode, it was dumped because it doesn't allow for the character-switching gameplay of the single-player campaign. True, but it still would have let you use each character's unique abilities to work together as a team. A missed opportunity then.

No matter. *Forgotten Realms* evolves the hack and slash action adventure game in a way that *The Return of the King* failed to. Switching between three characters to exploit their skills is such a simple idea, and one that's implemented beautifully. The more you swap at appropriate moments, the more rewarding the action gets without ever punishing players who tend to stick with a favourite character.

FIRST OPINION

Forget the slightly misleading D&D licence. Beard-stroking devotees of the tabletop game might disagree, but *Forgotten Realms* is better as an all-out action game. Look beyond the button-mashing and you'll find a level of strategy not often seen in such games.

/ JONATHAN TODD



“EVOLVES THE HACK
AND SLASH
ADVENTURE GAME.”



PICTURE PERFECT

A rough guide to the terrain you can expect to encounter on your journey through Faerun.



CHAPTER 1: War in Damara

Free Illius and Zhai in the middle of an orc war.



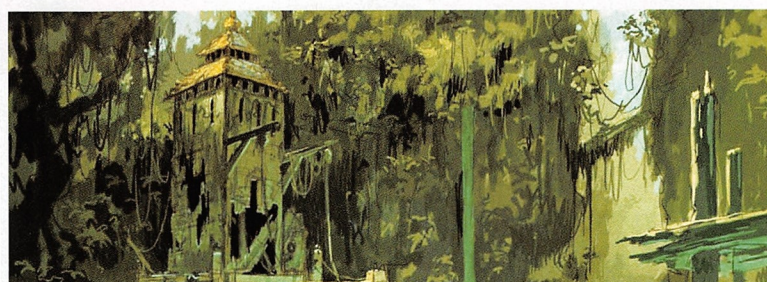
CHAPTER 2: Attack at Cederleaf

Rescue an elven village from two warring demons.



CHAPTER 3: The Wizard's Tower

Defend Khelban Arunsun's home from a Slaad lord.



CHAPTER 4: The Jungles of Chult

Fight a way through spiders and Yuan-Ti Abominations.



CHAPTER 5: The Yuan-Ti Temple

Retrieve the demon stone before a serpent avatar is resurrected.



CHEESY GRIN

By the looks of things he's been shaking his magic maracas for far too long.

“SONIC, NIGHTS, ULALA AND AKIRA – IT’S THE SEGA DREAM TEAM”

SEGA SUPERSTARS

The big-hitters of the Sega world come out to party, in this all-singing, all-dancing, hand-waving EyeToy extravaganza.

> GENRE	EYETOY
> DEVELOPER	SONIC TEAM
> PUBLISHER	SEGA
> OUT	OCTOBER
> ONLINE	NO

THIS IS HEAVEN. A VERITABLE GOLDMINE OF

joy for Sega fans. It's like ascending through a tunnel of light to the great amusement arcade in the sky where everything's set to freeplay and you've got a million bucks worth of change, just in case anything isn't. Loads of Sega's all-time biggest games, all remade for PlayStation2 and EyeToy, each looking as colourful and pretty as the day they first emerged from Sega's laboratories of genius. We cannot contain ourselves much longer.

The idea is this – some of Sega's greatest games have been remade to bring the best out of the simple webcam device, giving a whole new generation the chance to get the hang of flying loveable, floppy-eared mutant NIGHTS around his dream world, driving a yellow taxi in a crazy style, steering mice away from cats and into space ships and, of course, running really fast while pretending to be a blue hedgehog.

No cartridge has been left unturned, no disc case unopened, no game deemed too old or obscure to feature. Witness *Samba De Amigo* – more on that later – a game so few people own you could state a pretty credible case for it never actually existing in the first place. Then there's *NIGHTS*, adored by the older Sega fan, but likely to be as well-known among the kids of today as the chart toppers of the 1960s.

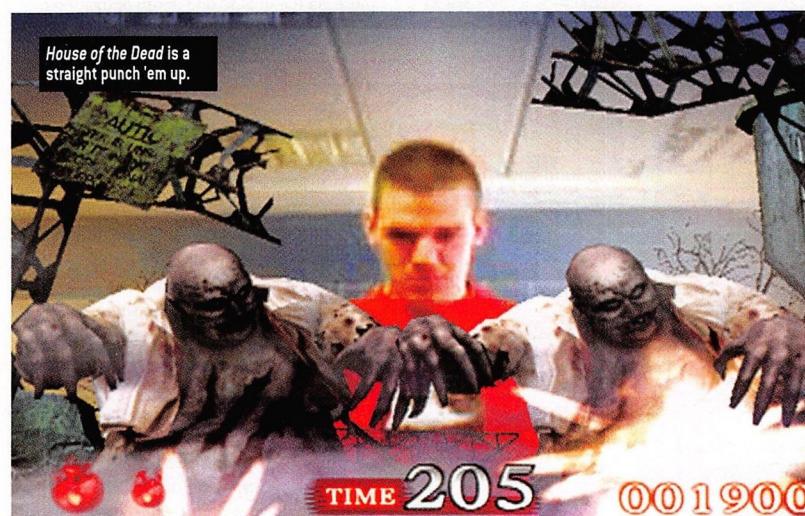
It's a great and peculiar mix of games, but your first port of call is bound to be at Sonic's door. *Superstars Sonic* – officially referred to as *Sonic's Super Speed Tube* – is pretty much just a tweaked version of the ultra-fast bonus round from *Sonic Heroes*, with you holding your arms outstretched – as if about to be embraced by Sega's love – harvesting rings and the all-important Chaos Emeralds. We're yet to receive any information as to the plot of this mini race segment, but early information suggests that Dr Eggman may have stolen the emeralds. Again. For about the 12th time.

The loop is full of the three staple elements of the *Sonic* series; rings, bombs and chaos emeralds. You steer the hedgehog by moving your hands around in a small semi-circle as if caressing the sides of an invisible giant beach ball, avoiding bombs, grabbing rings and looking out for those all-important emeralds. Collect them all and, as generations before us discovered, Sonic can become Super Sonic – faster and harder, with a yellowish tint that signifies your enhanced gaming status.

SOME KIND OF SUPERSTAR

And there's more. So much more. More than we deserve. *Samba De Amigo* was originally released for Dreamcast accompanied by a pair of plastic maracas and a mat, creating a niche game loved by the few Sega fans mad enough to blow 200 smackers on it. Shaking your maracas in time with the music is the idea, only thanks to EyeToy your more reliable hands now replace the plastic shakers.

Better still, the selection of music is great – *Superstars Samba* is no one-trick pony, instead coming loaded with Sega re-interpretations of classic tunes any many original songs from the girthy depths of the company's back catalogue. Those of you who have ever seriously considered getting a tattoo of your favourite Sega character will be delighted to hear that the *Daytona USA* theme-tune is in here to shake your



HOW DO THEY ALL WORK?

Throw your hands up in the air, and wave them around in coordination with the action. Like this:

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO? It takes a while to get the hang of this one. The starting position is you with your arms in a cradle shape in front of you – think Johnny Wilkinson. From there you move each arm up left and right, making Sonic run around the tunnel. Collect the emeralds and don't hit the bombs.
HOW STUPID DOES IT MAKE YOU LOOK? Quite stupid.



SAMBA DE AMIGO



WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO? The six directions relate to positions of your hands. You're supposed to be holding maracas for this one, remember. As some crazy Sega music plays, balls fly out from the centre of the screen – shake your hands on the outside rings when the ball hits them. Repeat, shaking it like someone's spiked your drink.
HOW STUPID DOES IT MAKE YOU LOOK? Very stupid.

VIRTUA FIGHTER

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO? This one requires a switch of pose to a three-quarters angle, from which you launch attacks at key body areas. Combos flash up for you to link hits together, and blocking is essential – do this by holding your arm close to your body. How EyeToy knows what you're doing is beyond us – but it works.
HOW STUPID DOES IT MAKE YOU LOOK? Extremely bloody stupid.



HOUSE OF THE DEAD



WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO? Sega's classic lightgun blaster gets the EyeToy treatment. Here you're surrounded by moaning zombies, while an innocent woman pops up every now and again in need of saving. To save her simply avoid punching her in the face and concentrate on smacking the right direction when a zombie rears its mutilated face.
HOW STUPID DOES IT MAKE YOU LOOK? Like an escaped lunatic.



SEGA SUPERSTARS FACT!

> FROM THE MAKERS OF...
The game's being developed by Sonic Team, the same people behind Sonic, NIGHTS, Samba and other triple-A titles.

> TOO MUCH LOVE
The finished game will contain about 12 mini-games, which, by our reckoning, means Sega is officially ACE.

> INTO OUR DREAMS
The prospect of a new game featuring NIGHTS is literally too exciting for us to convey in print.

> GOT ONE?
A set of Dreamcast maracas from the original UK release of Samba are worth a whopping \$300 now.



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"WE'RE REALLY EXCITED TO REVITALISE SOME OF OUR GREATEST STARS USING THIS GREAT NEW TECHNOLOGY. EYETOY IS A GREAT NEW WAY OF BRINGING SEGA CHARACTERS TO PS2 AND IT SHOULD EXTEND THE LIFE OF PS2."

hands at, accompanied by *OutRun's* essential Magical Sound Shower – both musical milestones in the rich history of game music.

And there's more good news for hand-wavers of old, thanks to EyeToy. Those old Dreamcast maracas were a bit unreliable and missed a few beats (despite the \$300 price tag that mint units currently attract on eBay) but EyeToy isn't and doesn't miss a thing. You wave your hand in a direction, the maraca shakes. It works. It's Samba, only better, now, and on PlayStation2. If your only console is still a Dreamcast, this really is the time to embrace the Sony way of doing things and stop living in 1999.

House of the Dead you can see here and imagine how to play rather easily – it's pretty similar to *EyeToy Play's* crazy *Kung Fu* thing, where players must beat the zombies and avoiding slapping the wimpy civilian woman who pops up to get in the way from time to time. Many other mini Sega games are planned but not yet finished, but their names are guaranteed to bring yet more froth to the mouths of the Sega hardcore.

Top of our 'we-really-want-to-play-it-please-Mr-Sega' list, though, is *Space Channel 5*; a super-cool game that features ultimate space babe Ulala battling aliens in a white linoleum vision of the future from the 1960s. Seeing as the brilliant Dreamcast original – which was easily Sega's coolest creation since *Sonic* himself – featured nothing much more demanding than you having to press up, down, left, right and a couple of shoot buttons in time to some music, it's an absolute banker for success on EyeToy.

We're also yet to be treated to the EyeToy version of *Crazy Taxi* and superb Gamecube-owning-excuse *Super Monkeyball*, but have been assured they're on their way and will be in the final game due on sale later this year. How they both play we have absolutely no idea, but, going by the quality on display so far, we have little doubt that they will, almost certainly, ROCK.

Also pencilled in for inclusion are versions of *Virtua Striker*, Gamecube egg-rolling platform game *Billy Hatcher*, *Crazy Taxi* and more, as the quality and depth of the Sega reserve bench is proven. With eight announced so far and "at least twelve" being the official line from Sega on how many more little games to expect, *Sega Superstars* is not going to be short on things to see and do. Neither will it be short-changing anyone on big grins, stupid poses and flailing limbs.

If you, like us, spent a huge amount of your childhood and early teenage years drawing pictures of *Sonic* cutting off *Mario's* head with a big sword, this could well be your new favourite game of all-time. Even people who don't know their arse from a hedgehog's elbow should find it a laugh too.

FIRST OPINION

Our initial disappointment with the idea behind *Sega Superstars* quickly turned into unbridled joy within minutes of firing the game up, as classic after Sega classic unfolded before our very eyes. Set to be a must-buy for *Sonic* fans and anyone looking for more reasons to dust down and re-use their EyeToy, you'll have to be a very stony-faced man indeed to not see the happy side of *Sega Superstars*.

/ GARY CUTLACK

SUPERSTARS!

Sega Superstars will contain plenty of other old school classics. Like these ones here...



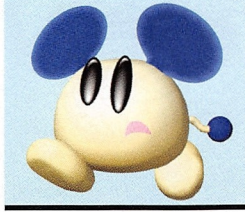
NIGHTS

Critically acclaimed yet doomed after appearing on Sega's mid-nineties Saturn console, NIGHTS was a flying odyssey set in a beautiful dream world. Swooping around collecting globes against the clock was its core value, an idea that should translate superbly well to EyeToy. Flying like NIGHTS? It's like a teenage dream come true.



SPACE CHANNEL 5

Within the Sega-obsessed community Ulala here is more famous than Lara Croft, thanks to the astounding space opera she stars in that is *Space Channel 5*. Ulala's direction-based play makes this perfect for an EyeToy translation, and our only hope is that she's recorded some 'new material' for her comeback.



CHU CHU ROCKET

Sega's Dreamcast was doing online gaming before anyone at Sony even knew what the internet was – this puzzler being the world's first online console game, challenging players to steward groups of mice away from hungry cats. We have absolutely no idea how this is going to work on EyeToy, but it'll doubtless be good family fun.



PUYO PUYO FEVER

These angry beans with attitude represent Puyos – Sega's own entry into the Tetris-influenced puzzle-game world. A bizarre yet ultimately simple organising-things coloured-blob game, *Puyo* on EyeToy is a mystery right now. Will you use your hands to shuffle beans? Or do you fend them off? Stay tuned to PSW for further *Puyo* revelations!



VIRTUA STRIKER

Artwork that's already been released to promote *Sega Superstars* includes this item for Sega's old football series, hinting at the inclusion of some kicking-based action in the final version of *Superstars*. This arcade footie game was never that well received by gamers, but that won't matter – EyeToy gaming is a whole new proposition.



BILLY HATCHER

Sega's newest and cutest creation, little *Billy Hatcher* has a strange penchant for rolling eggs around. The game only came out on Gamecube, so don't be alarmed if you've little or no idea who he is – just hope and pray that the amazing theme tune is copied across to PS2. Rolling eggs? With your hands? C'mon it's gotta be good.



The Sonic Speed Tube in all its (unfinished) glory.

“COULD WELL BE YOUR NEW FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME.”



Shake your hands in time to Samba De Amigo.



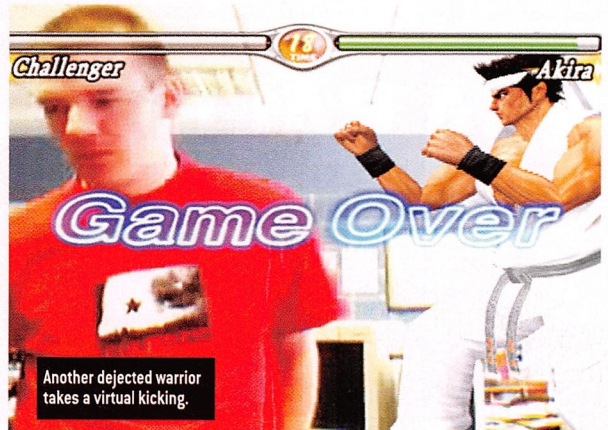
Rapid hand shakes get you in the Samba mood.



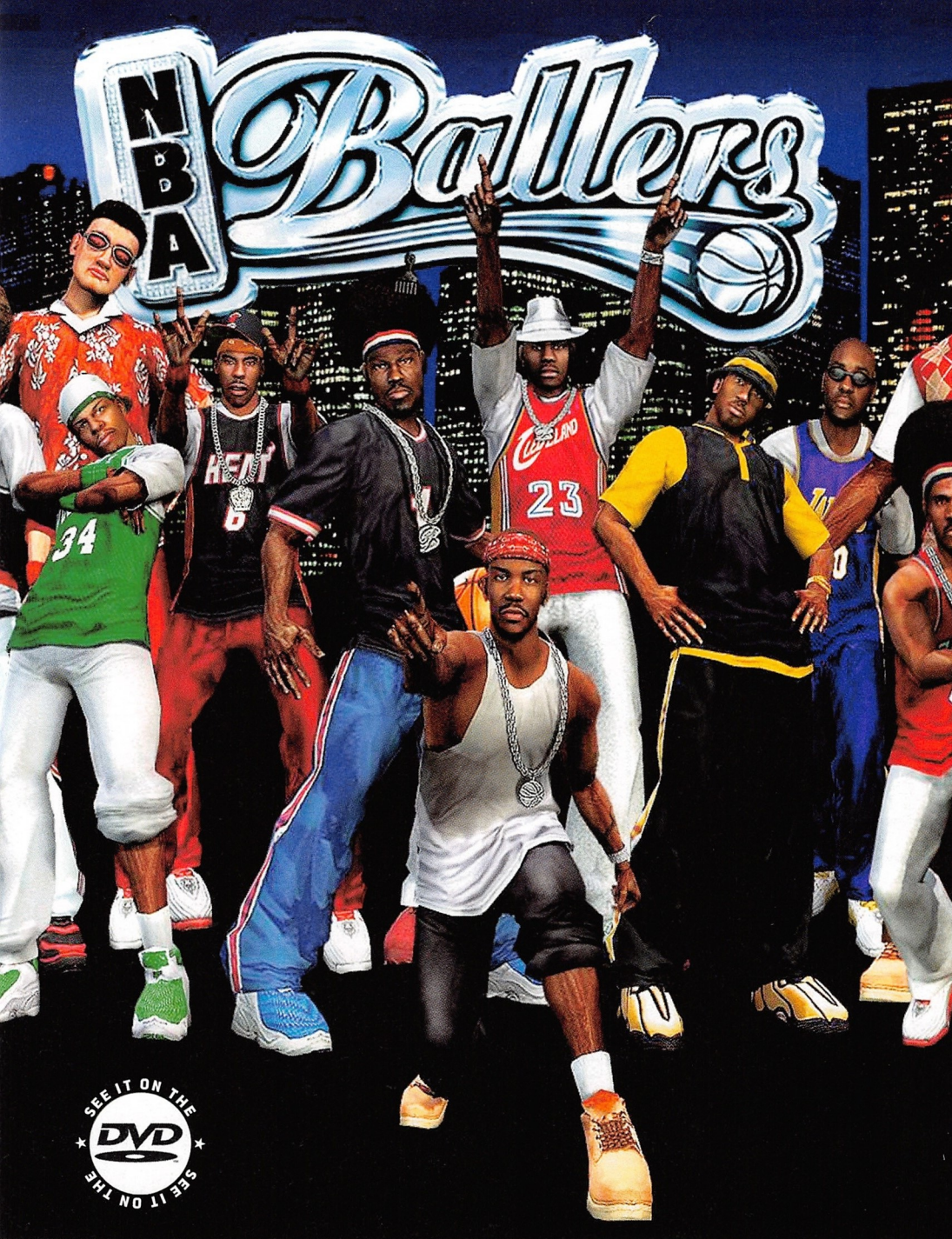
Raise your hand to block incoming face-boots.



Super Sonic! Can't you just feel the raw power.



Another dejected warrior takes a virtual kicking.



“THE OPPORTUNITY TO
PLAY AS YOURSELF IS
HIGHLY APPEALING.”

NBA BALLERS

Just as bling goes out of fashion, along comes the blingest game ever made. But is it a genuine Tiffany diamond or a cheap Argos fake?

> GENRE	SPORTS
> DEVELOPER	MIDWAY
> PUBLISHER	MIDWAY
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

BASKETBALL IS ONE OF THOSE GAMES WE

never really understood. We like watching the bearded men putting their rods in the water, but it all seems a bit cruel and pointless really. No wait, that's fishing. Basketball is the one with the tall guys in shorts and the hoops.

While we might not be experts on the game we shared a family-sized portion of fun with *NBA Jam* and *NBA Street*. Quick, simple and over-the-top, they offered us some quality game time. *NBA Ballers* is clearly following in their footsteps. It's big, it's brash and most importantly... it's bling!

The actual balling is simple stuff, usually one on one. The controls are also simple, covering your basic, shoot, dodge, pass and block options, with a 'Juice' modifier to give you access to fancier versions of your moves. There is also a 'Juke' function on the right analogue stick to let you perform subtle feints and, in combination with the Juice button, flashy 'Act a Fool' moves which involve a short cut-scene while your player passes the ball round his head, rolls it between his opponent's legs or suchlike. These can be defended with a well-timed button press. It's hard to do, but if you pull it off you'll have a huge advantage. It's all straightforward and easy to get into but offers a tactical game too.

The TV Tournament mode will give you access to most of the big names in the game. It's a simple ladder affair with you playing through to meet the boss at the top. Defeat him and he'll be unlocked for your use. You'll also earn skill points to buy players and flashy outfits with.

LIFE AINT NOTHIN BUT BITCHES AND MONEY

The stand out segment is the Rags to Riches mode, which lets you create a character from scratch and then guide him from complete obscurity to become the greatest baller the world has ever seen. Since *NBA Ballers* otherwise rewards by unlocking basketball players who will be completely unknown to all but the most devoted of basketball fans, the opportunity to play as yourself is highly appealing. Especially since it involves collecting a colossal amount of expensive tat and bling to deck out your baller, his ride or even his house with. Not house, sorry, crib. This really adds to the game, with the various necklaces, tattoos, shoes, hats and so on letting you style up a totally unique player. More interestingly, your baller's attributes will increase in line with how you play. Much like the *Tony Hawk's* games, you'll get a boost to your stats every time you fulfil certain criteria, such as shooting three three-pointers in a single game. This means that you get better at playing the game, just by playing the game.

The combination of swift and simple arcade action with the satisfying Rags to Riches mode means that *NBA Ballers* looks like a hot prospect. It's different and fresh, with the emphasis not just on beating your opponent but on humiliating them as you do so. We like the sound of that.

FIRST OPINION

Following on from the pure if slightly confusing pleasures of *NBA Jam* and *NBA Street*, *NBA Ballers* is proving to be an enjoyable piece of arcade fun. It doesn't always make sense to our delicate brains, but we were certainly enjoying ourselves. If you're keen on basketball titles, this should be balling bliss.

/ MARK SORRELL



NBA BALLERS FACT

> LOCATION LOCATION, LOCATION

You can get your ball on at various star's houses including Vince Carter's Pinnacle Tower Penthouse.

> THE STAR'S THE STAR

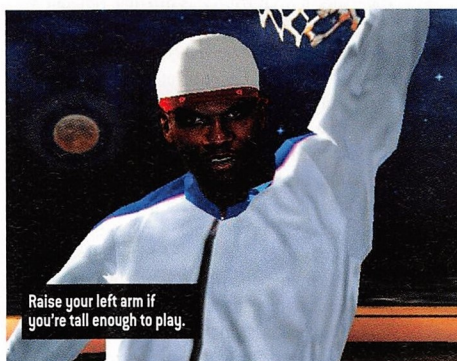
The full game has some 60 NBA stars available for you to unlock including Shaq, Magic Johnson and Kobe Bryant.

> G'S UP HO'S DOWN

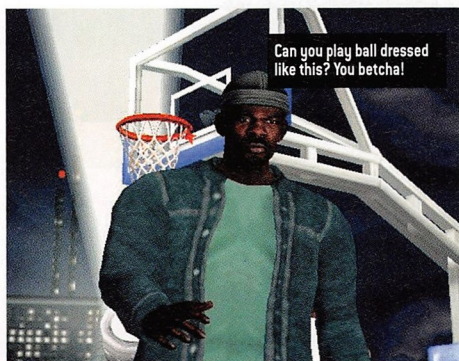
The soundtrack includes \$19 tracks from rap supremos including Phife Dawg and MC Supernatural.

> CRAZY LEGS

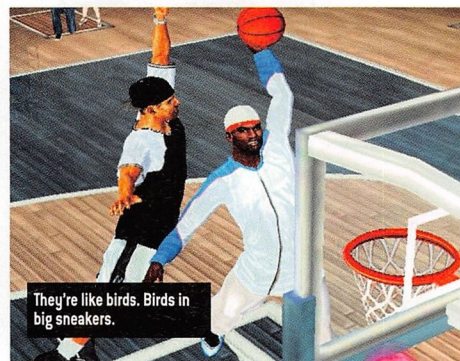
Midway brought in street ballers Hot Sauce Trickz to add an extra layer of believability to the motion capture.



Raise your left arm if you're tall enough to play.



Can you play ball dressed like this? You betcha!



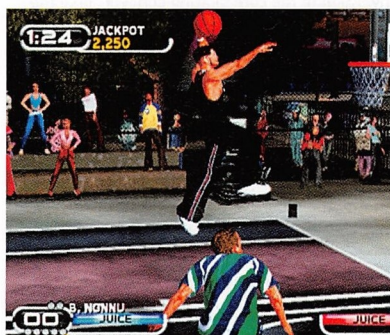
They're like birds. Birds in big sneakers.



1:06 JACKPOT 1,750

CARTER

That really does look far too energetic.



1:24 JACKPOT 2,250

NONNU



1:58 JACKPOT 0

He's clearly going to break something.

RICHARDSON



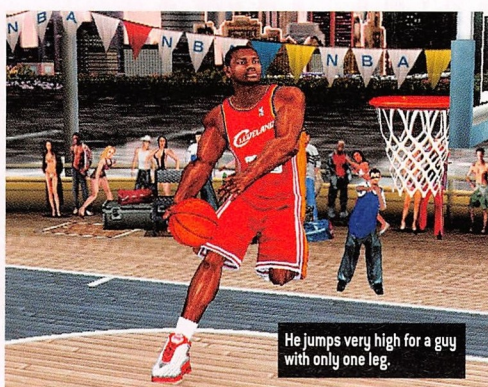
12.6 JACKPOT 3,360

Don't Come Round Here

3000

The special moves all have silly names.

ACE 08 12,250



He jumps very high for a guy with only one leg.



REALLY WEIRD SCIENCE

NBA Ballers wants to put you in the game. But what if you're a hideous mutant? No problems.



custom baller

Step 2 of 4 Define your Look

BALANCE: 0 MARK

face:

Scuff

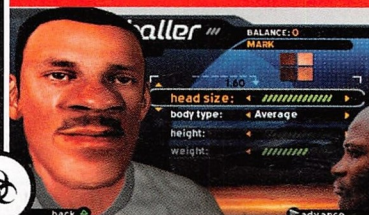
nose: shape

nose: size

nose: pos

chin: shape

Early Man – the start of a journey of wonder from off-the-peg blandness to full-on beast.



baller

Step 3 of 4 Define your Look

BALANCE: 0 MARK

head size:

body type:

height:

weight:

Hah! It doesn't take long to change that fresh-faced boy into an over-sized, hideous mutation.



modify baller

Step 4 of 4 Define your Look

BALANCE: 0 MARK

chains

The clothes were a little too tasteful, so here's something vile to put our opponents off with.



6.7 JACKPOT 2500

Bumm Rush

It worked! Our mutant, freak-faced weirdo came up with the goods. A bit like Wayne Rooney.



> GRIND IT!

THUG 2 will feature all your fave old-school tricks, plus plenty of new ones.

“HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE FUNNIER THAN A FAT MAN IN A BABY COSTUME.”

TONY HAWKS UNDERGROUND 2: WORLD DESTRUCTION TOUR

Don't forget to pack your toothbrush, some bandages and a tube of antiseptic. Tony wants to take you on a bruising trip around the world.

> GENRE	SPORTS
> DEVELOPER	NEVERSOFT
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	YES

HOW DO YOU FANCY A ROUND-THE-WORLD

trip? This is what *THUG 2* is offering. Not just a new chapter of the seemingly endless *Tony Hawk's* franchise, it's a rollicking romp around the globe that leaves a trail of skate-related carnage in its wake. *Jackass* jokester Bam Margera is as important as Tony himself in this game, and the whole thing looks to be taking its cues from his famously pain-filled show. Until they actually invent *Jackass: The Video Game*, this is as close as we're going to get.

But instead of just wanting to be different, *THUG 2* is quite happy to offer you more as well. More ways to play, to be precise. As well as the Career mode based on the one in the first *THUG*, developers Neversoft are adding some classic retro moments. You'll now be able to play through 'Classic' levels from older *Hawk's* games, with a two minute time limit to collect old favourites like the S-K-A-T-E letters. After all, why shouldn't you be able to have it both ways? A wicked interactive story in Career mode, and a pared-down point-based test like the ones we loved in the old games. It'll certainly placate old-school *Hawk's* fans who weren't happy with the free-roaming nature of recent games, that's for sure.

STOOPID COOL

Like *Jackass*, *THUG 2* cranks the 'stoopid dial' up to at least 11. Just like in the show, you'll be able to ride ridiculous skateboard substitutes like a hospital gurney, a hot dog vending stand and even the battery-powered Segway personal transport. In fact, every level will boast dumb vehicles to crack your head open with and spill your teeth on. Graffiti tagging and slapping stickers over every surface both have their part to play within the new game too.

Hearing stuff like this warms our twisted little hearts, but let's not forget that *THUG 2* needs to correct a few of the faults of its predecessor too. There were a weighty handful of things wrong with the first *Underground* game, for all its fun re-invention of the core skating concept. Take the cars, for instance. Oh God, the cars were bad, behaving like overgrown skateboards and feeling about as weighty as plastic tents blowing around in the breeze. They seemed to turn on their middles rather than around their wheels, and were just plain useless for anything trick-related anyway. Cars with real weight have to be a priority this time, cars that can be thrown about and smashed up and slid around and generally treated like cars not last-minute four-wheeled physics disasters chucked in purely for variety. After all, it's taken them years to perfect what happens when you get on a piece of board with wheels on. Did they think amazingly fast and complex vehicles would be simpler?

RUNNING AROUND, GETTING WHACKED

Hopefully there'll be a few more things to do off your board this time too. *THUG 1's* on-foot missions, which often involved avoiding enemies in a rather painstaking manner, really disrupted the rhythm of the game. The potential for amazing missions is definitely high for *THUG 2*, but it's going to take a lot more work to get it right. Still, this is Neversoft we're talking about here. They have a habit of honing their new game elements until you wondered how you ever played without them.

The story sounds even simpler than the last



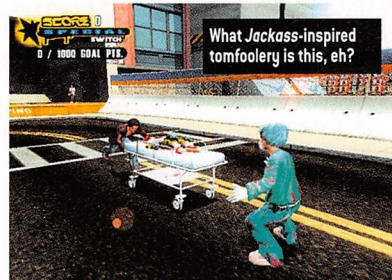
Levels look a lot more city-like this time round.



Trigger cannons to open up new areas to explore.



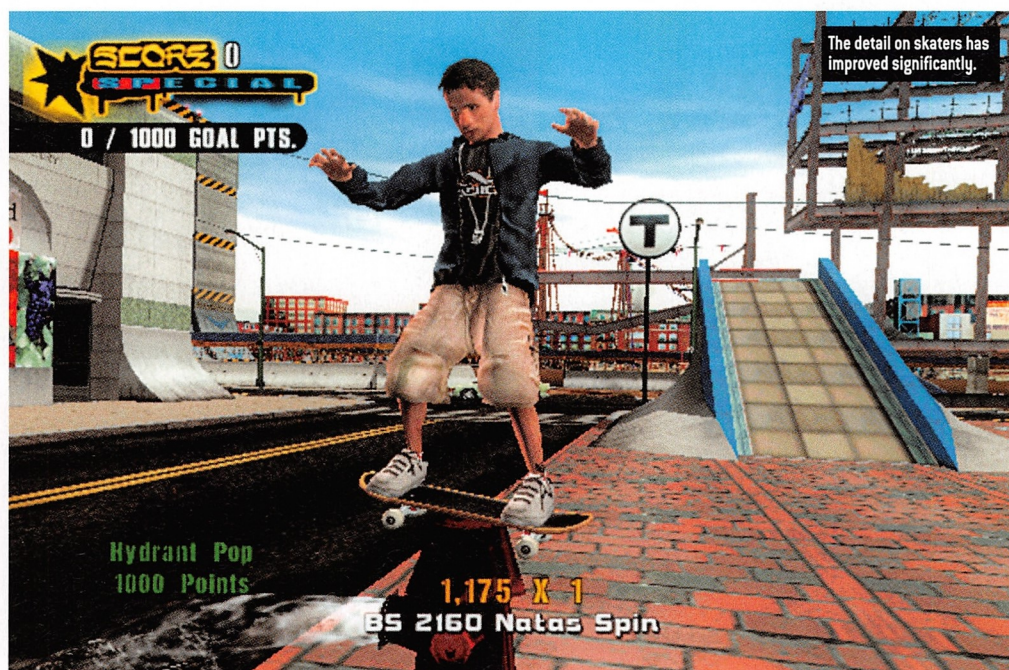
Levels extend into the sky. It's just like Spider-Man 2.



What Jackass-inspired tomfoolery is this, eh?



The chin fluff screams 'Restraining order', no?



The detail on skaters has improved significantly.

Hydrant Pop
1000 Points

1,175 X 1
BS 2160 Natas Spin



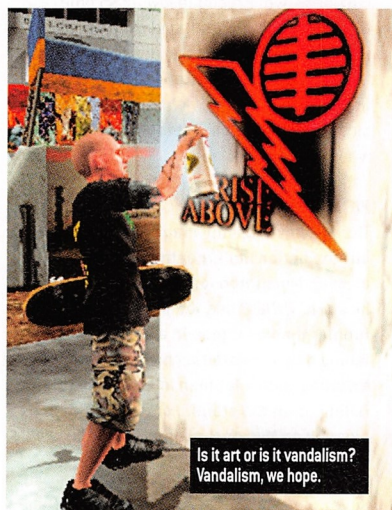
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 **FACT!**

> SPLAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
Players can pick up objects and throw them at passers-by. Rotten fruit's our current favourite ammo.

> FRESH START
You won't be able to port your *THUG 1* character over to this game, even though the story follows on from it.

> TRICK ON THE DRAW
You can create your own graffiti tags by layering graphics, just like you do when you make your custom board.

> I KNOW YOU!
Every location includes its own well-known comedy characters that you can control to discover bonuses.



Is it art or is it vandalism?
Vandalism, we hope.

IT'S BAA-AACK!

Classic mode, that is. With features from previous *Hawk's* games. Oh, how we've missed them, man.

Look! It's the time limit! You'll now have scant seconds to perform perfect tricks. No more endless retrying.

Collecting letters! C'mon, you know you missed doing it in the last game. It's the classic *Hawk's* challenge. Awww...

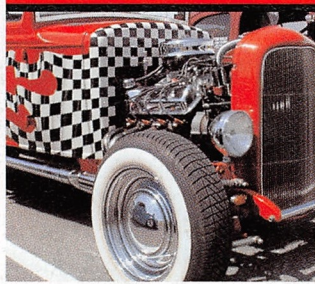


3 Classic environments from earlier games! Expect to see a truckload of cheekily updated areas from the previous five titles.

4 New tricks! Use your old-school levels to bust new stunts in. Ever wanted to try the Caveman in a *THPS4* arena? You can now!

BS Lipslide + Rail Pop + BS Noseslide + Rail Pop + BS 50-50 + Bus Stop Pop + BS Noseslide + Nose Manual +

GOOD THRILL STUNTING



BETTER CARS

Putting driveable cars into *THUG 1* was a nice idea. Making them handle like shopping trollies wasn't so clever though. This time, we simply demand better handling and more fun. And while we're at it, can we get in any car we see this time?

THUG 1 was great, but *2* can be even better if they take our prescription.



BETTER FACE PAINTING

THUG 1 arrogantly asked you to take a pic of yourself, scan it into your computer, send it online to developers Neversoft, put it onto a memory card and put it back into the game. Fingers crossed that we can do it all with EyeToy this time.



BETTER ON-FOOT ACTION

Don't get us wrong. The ability to get off your skateboard and trot around really did change the nature of the game in *THUG 1*. But we need more to do when we're not on our board this time round. Trampolining? Get in!



"IT'S MORE ABOUT GOOFING ABOUT AND HAVING A LAUGH THIS TIME."



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 DELIVERS A HILARIOUS STORY MODE, AN UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF CUSTOMIZATION, AND MORE MOVES THAN THE SKATE GODS COULD DREAM OF. GRAB YOUR BOARD AND PREPARE TO WREAK HAVOC."

game's trucks-to-riches one. You create a character who's flown around the world on some kind of insane global skating competition tour, competing with Tony Hawk himself against Team Bam, led by the irrepressible and seemingly indestructible Bam Margera. Playing with Team Hawk allows you to swap characters between goals, meaning that as well as perfecting your own skater you'll be able to make use of other team members' abilities to pull some sick stunts with.

Levels are massive compared with the ones in *THUG 1*, which were massive compared to *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4*, which were massive compared to... you get the idea. Safe to say then that they're very, very big. Pregnant whale size. And they won't just be packed with pro-level challenges — they're a whole lot more interactive than that. Every immense area has a handful of tasks that will alter the level to allow more tricking. It could be smashing through a barrier or triggering some cannon to fire into a construction site. Alright, that might not actually be a whole lot more interactive, but at least it's a step in the right direction.

IT'S IN THE GAME

Part the folds of the gorgeous tacked-on makeover stuff, and you'll find actual gameplay changes flourishing underneath. The graffiti and sticker-slapping antics should inject a certain new challenge. This being *Tony Hawk's*, you can spend hours designing your own unique tag before spraying it all over specific locations. Anyone who's played the Xbox's *Jet Set Radio Future* will understand how smart this sort of gameplay can be.

And slapping stickers can apparently — wait for it — slow down time during tricks to land extra-perfect complex manoeuvres and such. They're calling it 'Focus Time', we're calling it 'blah-blah-yeah-yeah-seen-it-so-many-times-before-for-God's-sake-stop-it'. But if it means more split-second control over tricks, like we think it might, then we'll reluctantly concede that it might be a good idea. It's still in the microwave toastie stage of uncertainty yet — it could be great, or it could be a massive disaster.

THUG 2 isn't really about copying elements of skate culture to the last detail, although there are enough customisable elements to let you do that if you want. No, it's more about goofing around and having a laugh this time. As long as this doesn't implode into its own craziness, we're ready to love this come November. The reintroduction of a simpler, more straightforward level of play is great, but does it show that the *Hawk's* franchise is finally losing its wind? Perhaps reverting to older solutions to the perennial problem of what to do next? Maybe.

FIRST OPINION

The window-dressing may be a lot goofier, but the action underneath is still as intense as ever. More intense, even? That remains to be seen. *THUG 2* has the potential to be funnier than a fat man in a baby costume falling down the stairs. And yet also more irritating than a fat man in a baby costume falling down the stairs... onto you. Fingers crossed on this one, people. Naturally, we'll keep you informed.

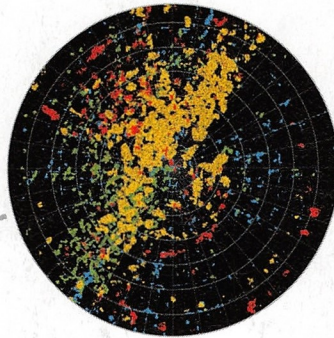
/ JOFF BROWN

Life's an adventure, so is your apprenticeship.

You may get the opportunity to travel throughout Australia and possibly overseas, where you'll also have time to do your own thing.



AN/SPS-49 radar can detect small fighter aircraft at ranges in excess of 415 kilometres.



APPRENTICESHIP SPECIFICATIONS

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

GUARANTEED JOB

GREAT PAY

UNMATCHED BENEFITS

NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE

PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES

TEAM ENVIRONMENT

GUARANTEE

You'll receive nationally accredited qualifications and the guarantee of a job at the completion of your training.

Start on \$23,000p.a. and earn over
\$43,000p.a. after 18 months.

Apprenticeships are open to both men and women. In fact, over 1/4 of our apprentices are women.

Even when on board ship you'll have access to a range of gym facilities.

NAVY TRADES

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PULL UP TO THE BUMPER

Mod up your battered old Nova and beautiful women like this will find you irresistible.

"TAKES THE MODDING,
THE RACING AND THE
SPEED UP A LEVEL."

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Need For Speed Underground has buffed up its alloy rims, fitted a bigger exhaust and lowered the suspension ready for another shot at the title.

> GENRE	RACING
> DEVELOPER	EA
> PUBLISHER	EA
> OUT	OCTOBER
> ONLINE	YES

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND DID REALLY

well. It came out of nowhere and scored massive commercial success. Everybody wanted a slice of its *The Fast and the Furious*-style gameplay. But its success really shouldn't have been such a shock. Why? Because the car modding scene and the Playstation 2 market are both dominated by young males. Given that, it's actually quite surprising that no one thought of *Need for Speed Underground* before.

Need for Speed Underground 2 aims to take the modding, the racing and the speed up to the next level – it's all about bigger portions. There's a lot more game here than there was last year, in fact it's full to the very brim with all manner of new features and fixtures and fittings.

The biggest of these changes is the new environment. Instead of a series of races, the game now takes place in one huge city with five distinct districts, all seamlessly connected together. There's no doubt about the developer's level of ambition; driving from one side of the city to the other takes quite some time even in the fastest of cars. The idea is to create a single racing environment rather than a series of separate events. Races and car modification shops are now accessed by driving to specific locations, which effectively turns the city into one gigantic menu.

There's also an attempt at creating emergent gameplay. Some of the races are found just by challenging drivers you see out cruising in their modded cars rather than at preset locations. Pulling up behind a driver signals your desire to race and so long as they accept, your race has started. These impromptu duels are called Outrun races and follow an unusual pattern. In order to win, one driver must get 300 metres ahead of the other. There's no set path to the race, the lead car chooses the route as he goes. As soon as you get 300 metres ahead, you win, but fall 300 metres behind and you'll lose. Winning these races, particularly against famous scene members, grants you access to secret shops and races, thus furthering your career.

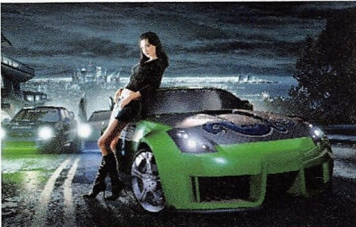
This also means that your path through the game is now far less linear than it was in *Need for Speed Underground*. The original game was criticised for being too restrictive and steps have clearly been taken to address these concerns. Races had to be won in strict order and upgrades had to be added as soon as they were available, removing the freedom of expression that defines the modding scene in the first place. Now progression through the game depends on which racers you decide to challenge and which races you decide to enter. There should be some 150 events in the final game although successful completion will only see you taking in perhaps 100 of those.

The car tuning is now a considerably more in depth affair. The joy of car tuning in real life comes from making something totally unique and absolutely yours. With twice the number of tuning parts and entirely new modification options such as audio systems and scissor doors, the potential for making your race beast your own is greater than ever. The modification options we have already seen seem more extreme than what was available last year, and are more up to date. There's a distinct Japanese feel to the visual upgrades with an organic feel to many of the parts.



MAX POWER

PSW presents the insider's guide to the modding scene.



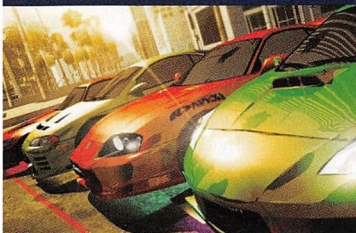
NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Number of possible combinations? 70 billion. Why bother? *Need for Speed* is the biggest name from the biggest publisher, so expect all your friends to have it. It's got lots of cars and a huge city to drive them around.



MIDNIGHT CLUB 3

Number of possible combinations? 70 billion. Why bother? The two big differences are the choice of vehicles and the damage. *MC3* offers SUVs as well as motorbikes. There's also full damage modelling, unlike *NFSU2*.



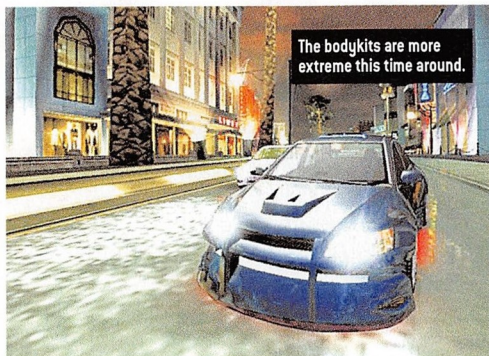
JUICED

Number of possible combinations? 7.2 trillion. Why bother? *Juiced* boasts numerous paint options (practically a game itself) and a novel crew system, where you must direct a team of drivers rather than just run your own race.

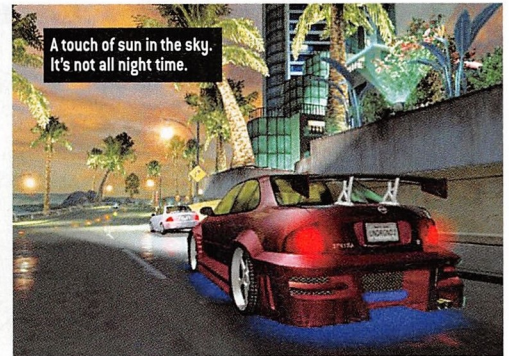


STREET RACING SYNDICATE

Number of possible combinations? A billion. Why bother? You get to bet one of your many girlfriends on the outcome of races. There are also police busts to consider, as well as real life prices. And betting women.



The bodykits are more extreme this time around.



A touch of sun in the sky. It's not all night time.



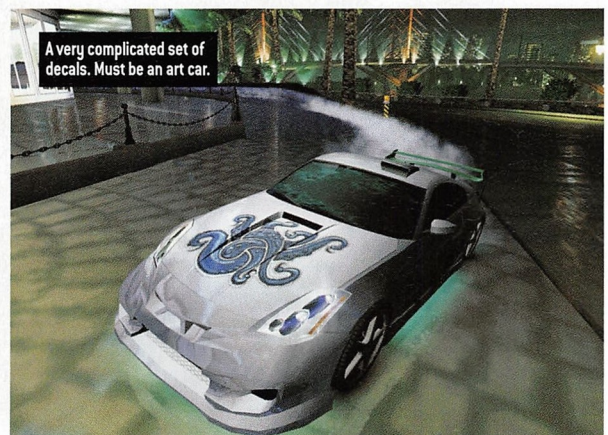
These tunnels link the major areas together.



No surface is left in its original condition.



There's no mistaking the Skyline's beefy snout.



A very complicated set of decals. Must be an art car.



NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2 FACT!

> SCORCHIO!

Hot new hot babe Brooke Burke will be starring as Rachel, your hot guide to the underground scene. Hot!

> INFINITY PLUS ONE (NO RETURNS)

With so many customisable parts, the game will offer literally billions of possible combinations. Billions!

> SKYLINE, EVOLUTION, SX

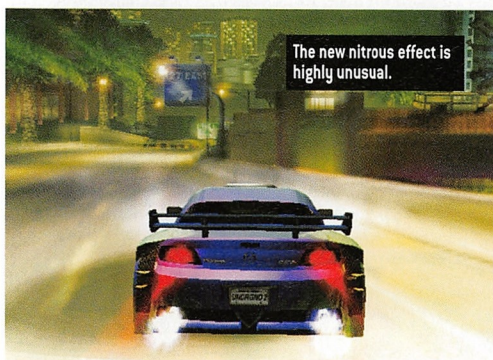
There will be over 30 cars in the game including the tuner's favourites from Nissan, Honda and Mitsubishi. Japan!

> BASSAGEDDON

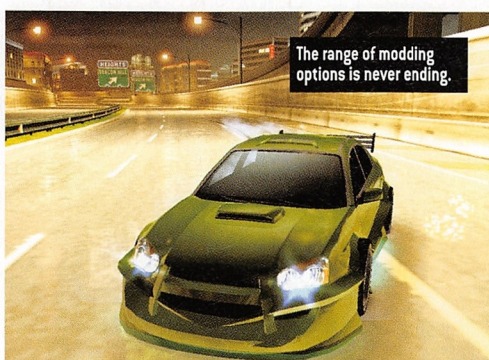
For the first time ever, *Need for Speed Underground* will feature audio upgrades for your car. Bass!



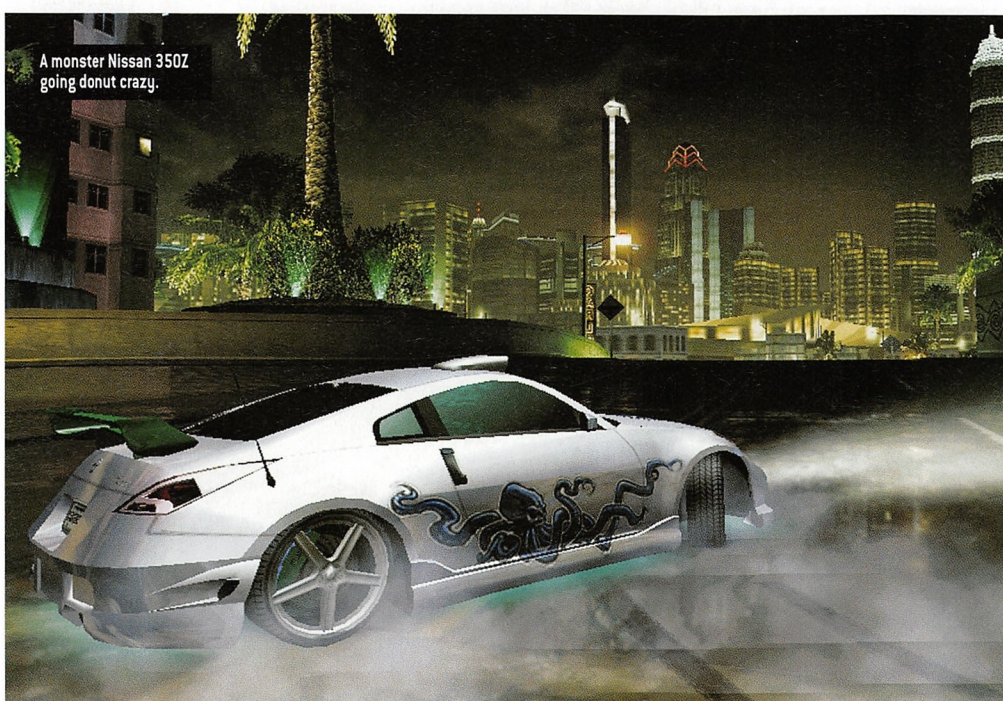
The colour palette is a little limited for us.



The new nitrous effect is highly unusual.



The range of modding options is never ending.



A monster Nissan 350Z going donut crazy.

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2 REALLY CAPTURES ONE OF THE REASONS I LOVE MY CARS SO MUCH – THEY'RE A CANVAS FOR SELF-EXPRESSION."

FINELY TUNED FARTBOX

Even deeper is what's going on under the hood. Upgrading parts used to be little more than a case of incremental power ups – Turbo1, Turbo2 Turbo 3 and so on. Now, the more advanced parts have fully customisable settings, letting you tweak your suspension dampers or your turbo pressure or your gear ratios, plus lots more inexplicably technical stat-fiddling besides. This should all combine to keep performance junkies and compulsive obsessives alike happy. Combined with the visual freedom, you now have the chance to make a stealth car – something that's horrendously powerful where it counts, yet looks completely stock from the outside.

Naturally enough, *Need for Speed Underground 2* will be fully online. EA are keeping tight-lipped about the specifics of their online plans, but you can expect to see at least four-player online races and cruises. There will be a number of special online-only modes making it into the final product but there are no details of exactly what these will entail. One thing's for certain though; we're already looking forward to seeing other people's unique creations, and showing off our own shiny metallic monsters too.

While there's no doubt that some of the problems with the original game have been rectified, and despite the fact that a considerable degree of ambition is being shown in the design of the huge city, the game still feels like it's missing the point somewhat. The Outrun races are somewhat vague and random, and despite the city's size it all looks a bit too samey. More worrying though is that the handling of the cars isn't up to scratch, and the track design is second rate. The cars don't slip and slide and grunt and squeal how you might want or expect them to. Rather, they feel stiff, heavy and sluggish. The tracks seem incompatible with the handling of the cars; smooth tight cornering is all but impossible with so much understeer going on. This was true of the original and little seems to have changed here. We'll be keeping our fingers crossed.

What we've seen so far is partially encouraging and partially not-so-encouraging. We really want to love *Need for Speed Underground 2* – car modding games quite definitely put their key in our ignition. While they seem to be doing more than ever to let you customise your motor into something that is truly and uniquely yours, actually driving the buggers is still more of a chore than a pleasure. With some truly amazing driving games already out there, *Need for Speed Underground 2* really needs to improve the car handling and track design to ensure that it's a great racing game as well as a car modders wet dream. We like the free roaming possibilities and the promise of brand new online modes based upon the free roaming fun. *Need for Speed Underground 2* is all about more. Let's just hope it's not more of the same.

FIRST OPINION

For us, this game is balanced on a knife's edge. It has huge ambition but currently lacks the basic raw fun and playability to make it great. We hope that time gets spent making the driving as enjoyable as possible but we fear it's all going to go on making that massive city work.

/ MARK SORRELL



CAR WARS

The car's very much the star in *Need for Speed Underground 2*. We take a look at some of the biggest players on the circuit.



MAZDA RX7

Possessed of the endlessly amusing "Wankel" rotary engine, the Mazda gets insane power out of a diddy engine. It also looks almost exactly like greased up sex.

ENGINE TYPE	1.3 turbocharged Wankel rotary engine
0-60 TIME	5.2 Seconds
MAX SPEED	155mph
BHP	237



NISSAN SKYLINE GT-R

The Daddy. One of the most technologically advanced and easy to push cars ever made. It can easily outpace Ferraris and Porsches and can be tuned up to a massive 1000bhp.

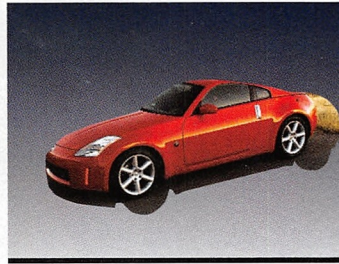
ENGINE TYPE	2.5 Twin Turbo four cylinder
0-60 TIME	5.2 Seconds
MAX SPEED	156mph
BHP	280



MITSUBISHI LANCER EVOLUTION VII

Rally monster and number one choice for the road warrior with kids, this four-door saloon is an unsurpassed point-to-point magician. Its status in the underground scene is assured.

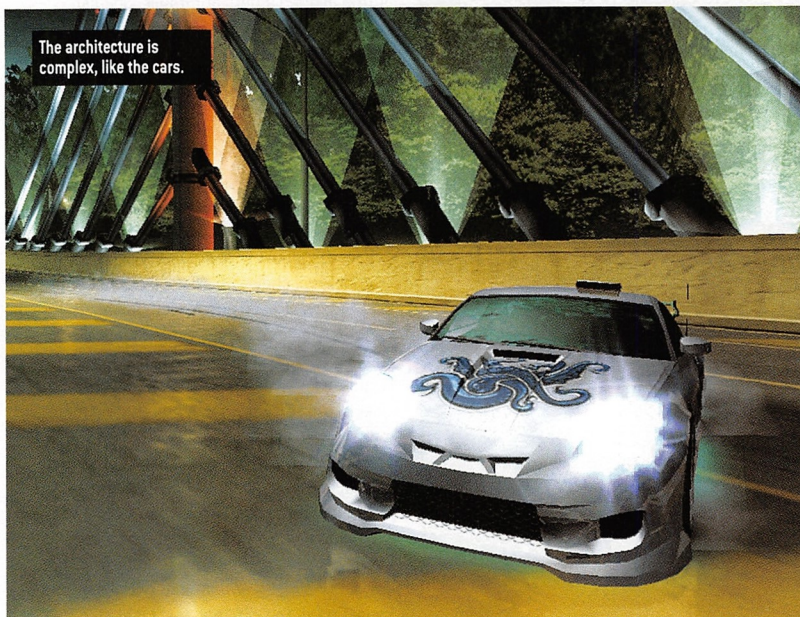
ENGINE TYPE	2.0 turbo charged flat four
0-60 TIME	5.7 Seconds
MAX SPEED	112mph
BHP	276



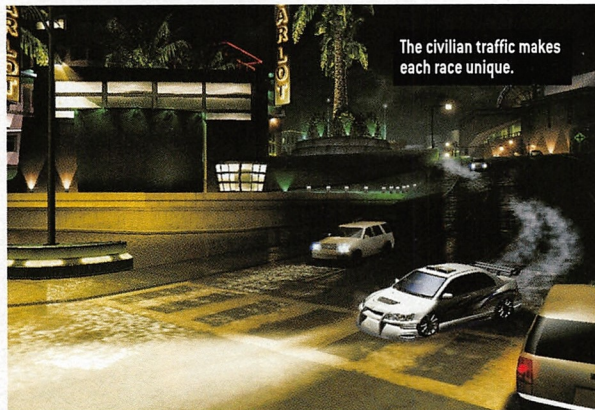
NISSAN 350Z

A reinvention of Nissan's classic sports cars from the 1970's, the 350Z boasts evocative looks and impressive power. Naturally, this makes it a hot choice in the modding scene.

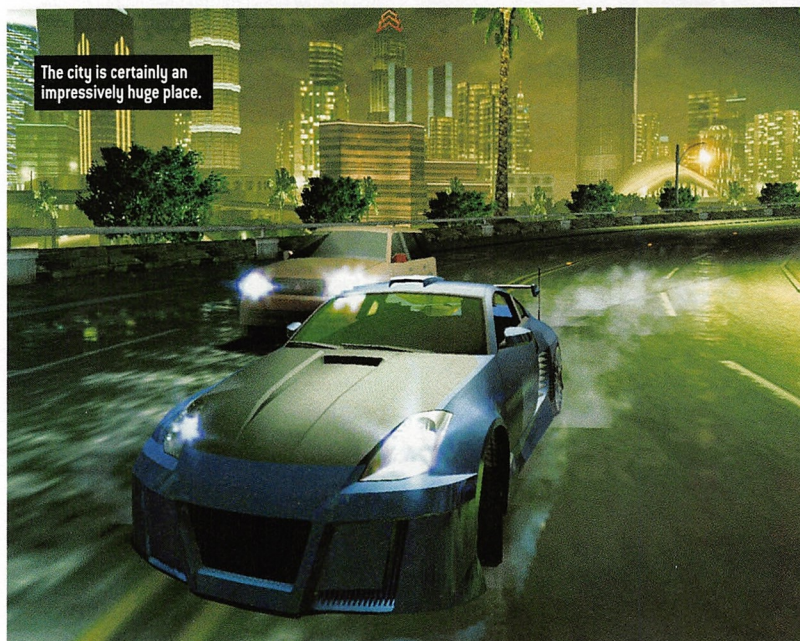
ENGINE TYPE	3.5 litre V6
0-60 TIME	6.0 Seconds
MAX SPEED	155mph
BHP	287



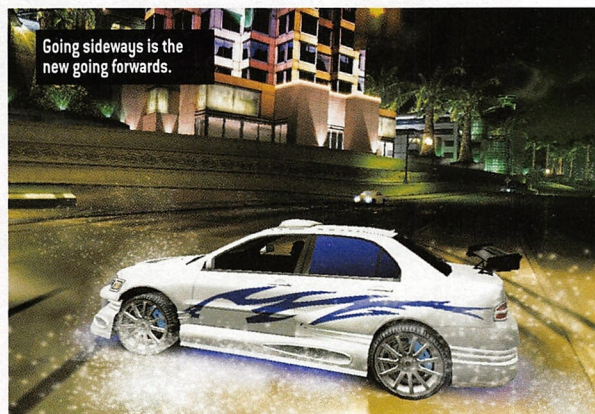
The architecture is complex, like the cars.



The civilian traffic makes each race unique.



The city is certainly an impressively huge place.



Going sideways is the new going forwards.



Obscenely huge arches hiding oceans of rubber.

> **INFERNAL AFFAIRS**

Half-man, half-demon, all-ass-kicking Dante is back in a new game that could just restore his glory.



“THE SPEED AND STYLE OF THE FIGHTING HAS LEFT US FEELING QUITE DAZED.”

DEVIL MAY CRY 3

They say the Devil has all the best tunes. He's cornering the market in action games too. Jesus had better get a wiggle on.

> GENRE	ACTION
> DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
> PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

IT'S HARD NOW TO REMEMBER, BACK IN THE

grainy, sepia-toned days of 2001 when our steam-powered PS2s were all shiny and new, just how amazing the first *Devil May Cry* game was. Sure, you fought dead things, but you didn't have to turn in a tight circle like you did in *Resident Evil*. You carried a sword, but you could destroy enemies in a hail of bullets as well. You explored a gigantic castle, but you didn't have to wait ages for each room to load. In short, it took the clichés of survival horror, threw them out of the window and replaced them with gameplay and graphics so slick and gorgeous, if they were our sisters we'd still want to fondle them. It was a true classic, reeking of sex and class. But our love turned sour when we played the sequel, which turned out to be little more than an empty echo of the original, rather than the amazing leap forward we'd dared to hope for.

And now we've played the third *Devil May Cry*. Played it until our delicate fingers have been rubbed raw through repeated gunning of the X button. Played it until our fragile, doe-like eyes have turned into swollen red orbs that weep pus and tears. In other words, we've played it quite a bit. And now we're going to tell you exactly what it's like. It's good news.

DEVIL OF A TIME

Devil May Cry 3 is a prequel to the events in game one. As the game starts out, Dante has no idea of his half-demon heritage and is about as magical as a bucket of onions. That's until his brother Virgil shows up. His evil brother Virgil, no less. Virgil's already adept at using the powers of darkness to get what he wants and he's not about to let any squawky sibling stop him. Fortunately for us, Dante gets wise to his 'special' powers straight away, gaining more and more abilities as the game progresses.

In gameplay terms, it means that this time around you get to choose how Dante fights. Because Dante doesn't know how to brawl at the start of the game, you develop his style as he learns his powers. There are four paths to go down: Gunslinger, Swordmaster, Trickster and Royal Guard. You can read the 'Fight Like Hell' panel (below right) for the finer points on how it all works, but essentially it means you'll earn different special moves for each style and be able to play the game in markedly different ways. Intriguingly, Capcom is even tossing around the idea of adding more fighting styles, time permitting. Let's hope so.

And what fighting. The speed and style of the moves has left us feeling rather dazed. If you thought Dante was a bit tasty with his weapons before, prepare to be dazzled by the improvements on show here. For example, he can now surf on enemies' bodies while shooting at other attackers, and one of the most bizarre attacks comes courtesy of a magical guitar that belches down evil heavy metal lightning on nearby foes. Add in a set of kick-ass nunchukas and the usual sword-based upgrades and you've got a rack of weapons big enough to clear every demon out of Hell with. Combos are quite simply mindblowing. Even using the slower fighting styles, Dante whizzes around like a frog in a blender, spinning and cartwheeling around the battlefield in a way that would give the Prince of Persia a nasty headache. Yeah, he's still got it. The real question is, does anybody still care?



Epileptics look away now – there's many a flash here.



If your sword's not bigger than you, you're nobody.



Bok! Dunno what's going on, but it's extremely cool.



DEVIL MAY CRY 3 **FACT!**

> IT'S A CLASSIC
DMC3 abounds in obscure literary references. Dante and Virgil are both authors of supernatural epics.

> 'ARK AT 'IM
A dark and mysterious character called Arkham shows up, holding secrets to Dante's demonic past...

> MASH IT UP
During big fights, parts of the scenery will break away as you scrap, leaving piles of wreckage in your wake.

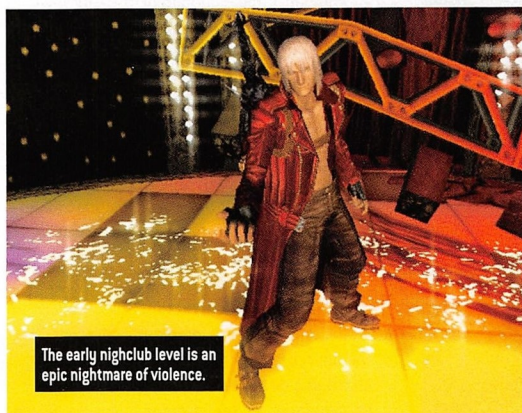
> THIRD TIME LUCKY
The team behind DMC3 is the same one that made DMC2 – they've promised to clean up their act this time though.



A younger Dante, leaner and meaner. But still a bit camp.



Dante plays his demonic guitar for max damage.



The early nightclub level is an epic nightmare of violence.



The new game has a much more industrial feel to it.



This distant figure is 'Lady', the demon hunter girlie.



Gorgeous lighting and shadow effects abound.

FIGHT LIKE HELL

Dante's four fighting styles – which will you choose?



GUNSLINGER

The beginner's favourite, allowing Dante to 'off' his hideous enemies before they get within spitting distance, thanks to his double gun skills.



SWORDMASTER

Takes Dante much closer into the action, where he'll use his blade to dispatch enemies right in front of him. And behind him, and to the side, and in the air...



TRICKSTER

This is the most acrobatic style, emphasising the demon hunter's ability to climb walls, somersault gaps and generally do his best Wayne Sleep impression.

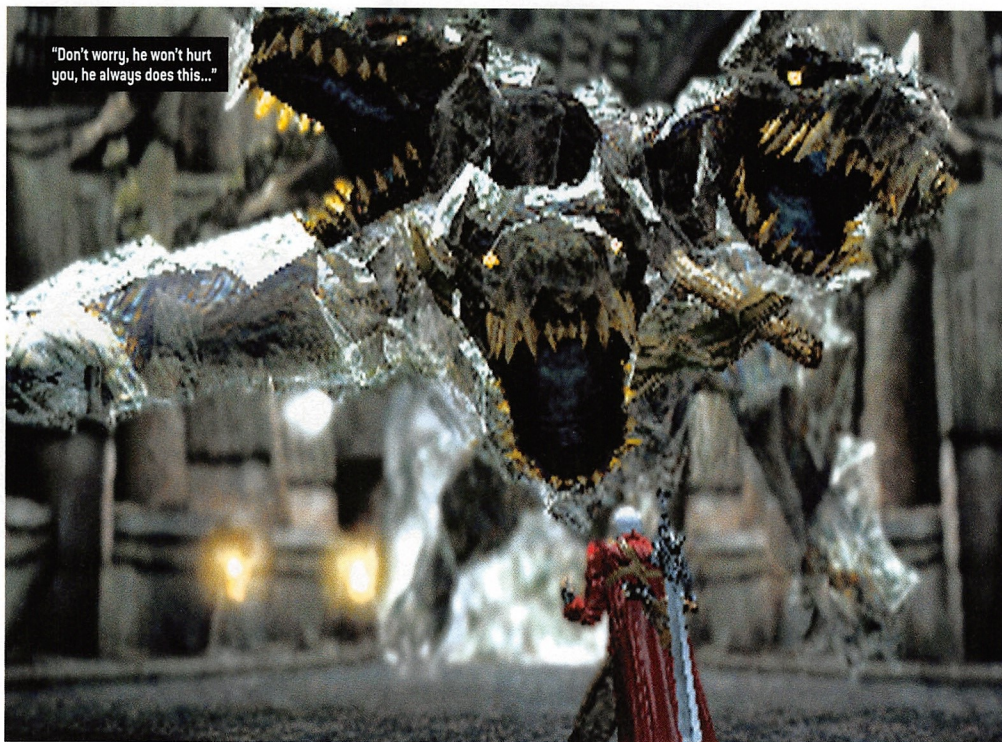


ROYAL GUARD

Royal Guard gives you a slower, more defensive approach, thus guaranteeing it'll only ever be employed when you're on your fourth replay.



Boss alert! They haven't got any smaller or easier to kill.



"Don't worry, he won't hurt you, he always does this..."

"THE MOST BIZZARE ATTACK COMES FROM A MAGICAL GUITAR THAT BELCHES EVIL HEAVY METAL LIGHTNING AT NEARBY FOES."



It wouldn't be DMC without the gothic architecture.



He's musing now. In one second, he'll kill you dead.



Being broody is all part of a demon hunter's work.



"Sword, guns, coat... damn, I forgot my shirt. Again!"

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"DEVIL MAY CRY 3 PACKS NON-STOP THRILLS AND A CAPTIVATING STORY LINE INTO ONE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED PACKAGE. ACTION GAME FANS ARE IN FOR ONE HELL OF AN EXPERIENCE."

HELL'S KITCHEN

Naturally, the horde of supernatural scum you have to eliminate is both as grotesque and darkly fantastic as ever. There's a horrible satanic energy in the way these melted minions move and attack, more reminiscent of the original puppet demons from the first game than anything else. They're not the only thing that evokes the first game rather than the second. Some of the elements that really bugged us in *Devil May Cry 2* have been tweaked or returned to their earlier versions. For instance, most of those massive environments are gone, replaced by more intimate settings. This may sound like a step back, but it's not. *Devil May Cry 2* narked a lot of players by letting Dante get hit in the back by missile attacks from far-away enemies. That won't happen any more. Dante's back to fighting where he's always been happiest – with his back to the wall. It's hard to see from these pics, but the camera angle's been subtly altered too, so you can see enemies attacking you from behind.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

So is it all good? Well, we can't fault the hyperkinetic fighting or the over the top sense of style. (At one point Dante munches away on a slice of pizza while shooting demons through the head.) But it's still not clear if the new game can mimic the rich colours and velvet moods of the first title. The signs are promising, and if the designers keep plugging away we'll be hoping for great things. The environs of the first level – a demon-infested nightclub – look suitably gritty and there's been a definite technical improvement in the graphics too. Technical improvements don't mean everything to us, though. We'd rather have style and flair over real-time shadows anyway.

Anyway, it feels good to be back in *Devil May Cry* land. Especially as the story seems to be the usual patchwork of Euro demon-lore and Japanese cartoon insanity. The one character who stands out at the moment, aside from mad-as-trousers Virgil of course, is a lady. Called, um, Lady. She's a demon hunter who's vowed to exterminate every non-human being in her path. That includes silver-haired half-demons, naturally, so expect a climactic battle followed by some teamwork. You won't actually play as Lady, though, as it's all about the Dante action this time.

Oh, and we're not completely convinced by the soundtrack either. It's what we can charitably describe as 'hard rock'. The type usually favoured by Germans in poodle perms and leather jackets and, unsurprisingly, a small section of Japanese enthusiasts. But then that's what *Devil May Cry 3* is aiming to be: the hard rock of videogames. So make the devil sign, start moshing and say after us, "*Devil May Cry 3* hard rokkin non-shoppin' crazy guitar choons yesshhh!" You knows it.

FIRST OPINIONS

Devil May Cry 3 has every chance in the world of claiming the first game's crown and wiping our memories clear of the second game. A little more tweaking, a touch of French polishing around the environments, a wee drop of oil on the gameplay, and we'll be dealing with a bona fide hit game here. If it messes up, we may not return to the series for a demonically long time.

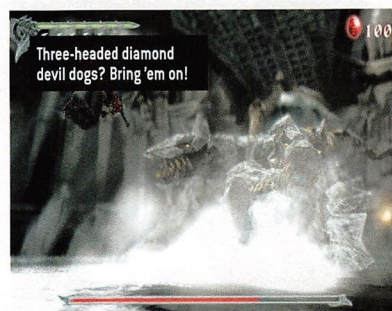
/ JOFF BROWN



Real close combat veterans can use fists to kill now.



Eerie scythe monsters can't stop the D-man.



Three-headed diamond devil dogs? Bring 'em on!



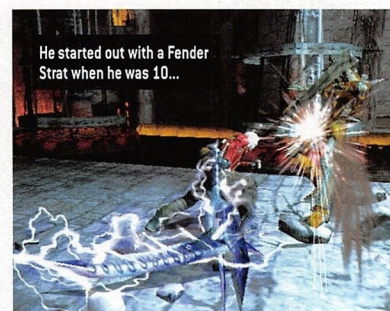
"You've had your 15 mins drinking up time, sir..."



One small Dante in a very big, scary demon world.



We're sorry, but that's just blatant showing off. Stop!



He started out with a Fender Strat when he was 10...



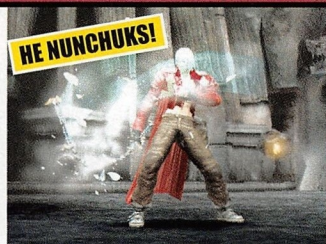
Holy mother of Satan! That's top nunchuka work.

ENTER THE DANTE

The demon-slayer has gone a bit Bruce Lee!



HE KICKS!



HE NUNCHUKS!

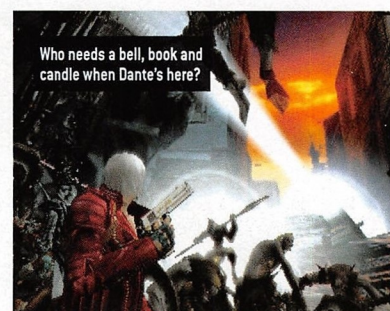


HE PLAYS GUITAR!

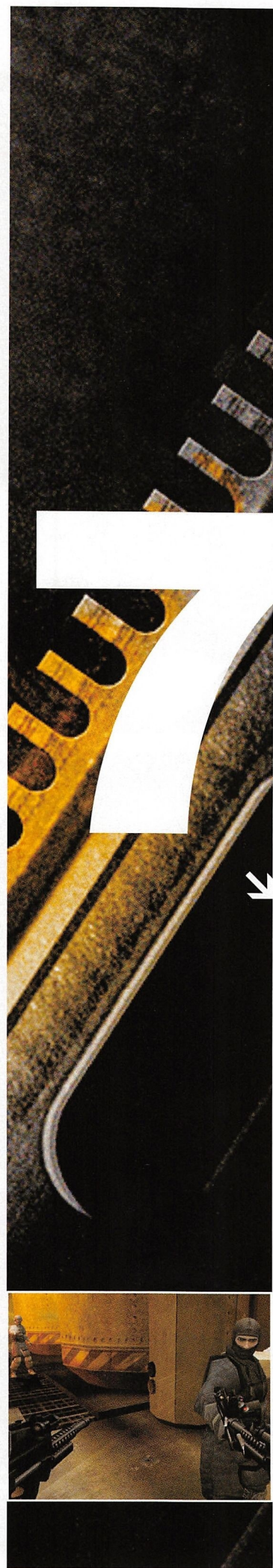
HAAAI-YA! You can assign points to different aspects of your fighting style, meaning martial arts kicks are much more common in your repertoire.

WHHSSHKK! Oh yes. This is more like it. You'll have to be close to hit the enemies, but when you do these nunchukas will inflict a hell of a lot of damage.

NEEEE-WAAW! Swords are for the weak and girls. In martial arts style, Dante uses whatever's to hand to hit the enemy, including his electric guitar.



Who needs a bell, book and candle when Dante's here?



REASONS WHY GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT WILL RULE THE WORLD

There was no Bond movie this year, but with *Goldeneye: Rogue Agent* on the way we barely noticed. Here's 17 reasons why EA's new espionage experience will leave us shaken and stirred.



With guns like these, lots of violence is guaranteed.

They won't be laughing when they're full of lead.



1 LOADS OF INCREDIBLE VIOLENCE

This will be the most violent Bond game of all time, that's for sure. While we won't be seeing buckets of gore washing around the levels – this is borderline family entertainment, after all – you can expect to see a good deal more in the way of death and destruction than you would in an average Bond game. It's all about you being a bad guy and that'll be reflected in every part of the game. No more smarmy one-liners. You're a rogue agent. You're bad. And you're bloody violent with it.

COVER GAME

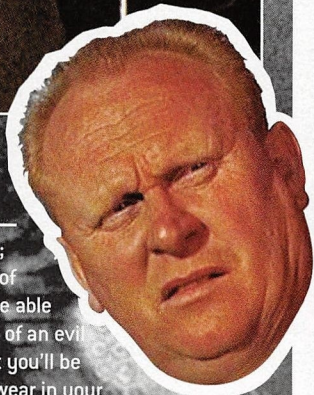


No Mr Bond, I expect you to die! Cue evil laughter.



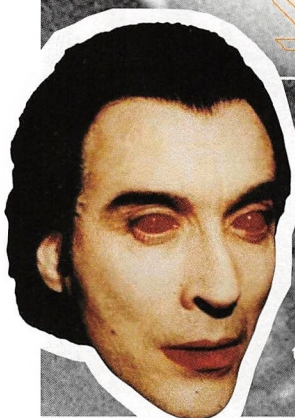
2 YOU'RE THE BAD GUY

You're not on Her Majesty's Secret Service this time; you're on your own secret service as an employee of Auric Goldfinger and mortal enemy of Dr No, you'll be able to experience the Bond universe from the other end of an evil space laser. No more saving the world, this time out you'll be ruling it instead. Make sure you pack a tiny gun to wear in your sock, clean underpants and your own robot army.



4 DRACULA'S IN IT

Well, not Dracula as such, but rather his most famous screen face, Christopher Lee. The gaunt-faced scare expert is reprising his role as triple-nippled, hot-shot super-assassin Scaramanga – The Man with the Golden Gun – so we doubt very much that he'll be getting up to any funny business with bats and virgins. Still, we'll be packing the garlic machine gun and the holy water pistol, just in case. You just can't trust those demonic flesh eaters.



3 YOU CAN USE TWO GUNS AT ONCE

Dual guns are where it's at this season. Any single-handed weapon can be used with any other, with some of the more creative mix-ups unleashing incredible new levels of destruction. Creating a napalm slick and then setting it alight for instance. It's nasty, it's inventive and it's got plenty of John Woo cool. We fully expect to spend the entire game jumping sideways through the air in slow motion, shooting bad guys in the face.



It's clearly all about the pistols. The pro's choice.



We're not quite sure why you'd need two of these.



5 IT HAS AMAZING PARENTS

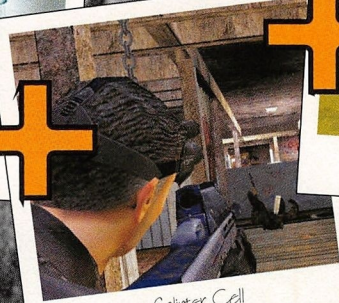
There are all manner of very clever video game hofpins beavering away in some office in America, working to bring you the best Bond game they can. Team members include veterans from games such as *Halo*, *Metal Gear Solid*, *Splinter Cell* and the *Madden* series. With pedigree like that, you just can't go wrong.



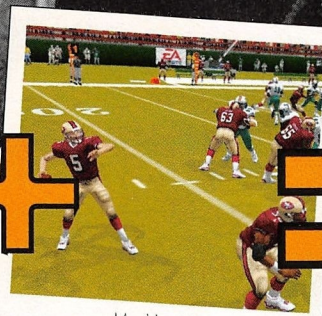
Halo



Metal Gear Solid 2



Splinter Cell



Madden NFL



Rocket launcher + chopper = massive explosion.

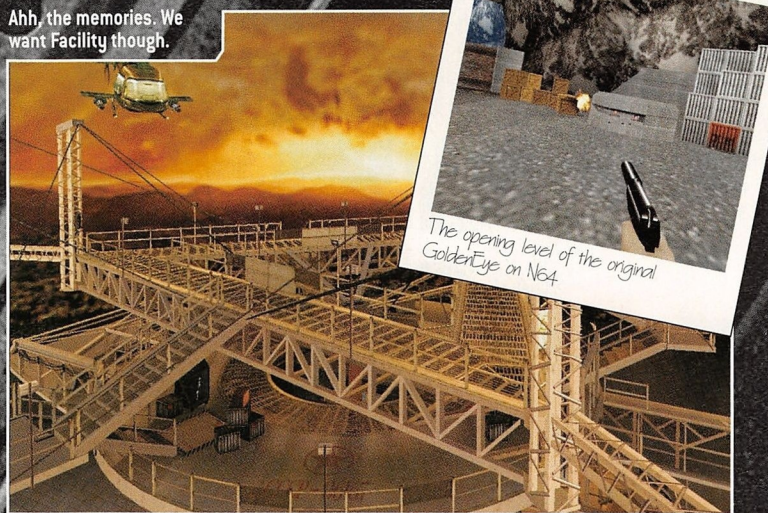
That really is a very big gun indeed. Fantastic.



6 YOU CAN SHOOT HELICOPTERS DOWN

Not just helicopters either. Vehicles are set to be an important part of the *GoldenEye* world, although you won't actually be able to fly them yourself. It won't just be a bunch of on-rails shooting though – vehicles will react to what's happening "on the fly" and you'll be free to move around them and fire as you see fit.

Ahh, the memories. We want Facility though.

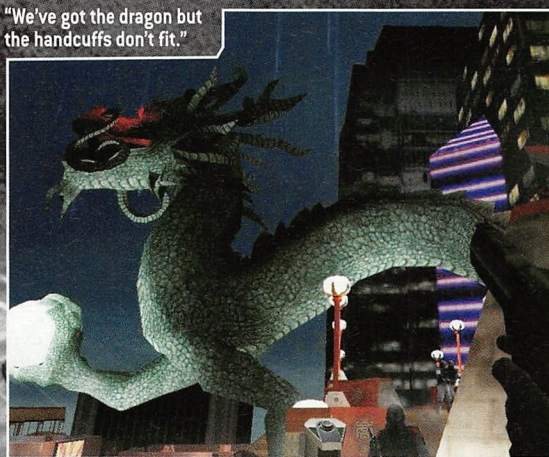


The opening level of the original *GoldenEye* on N64.

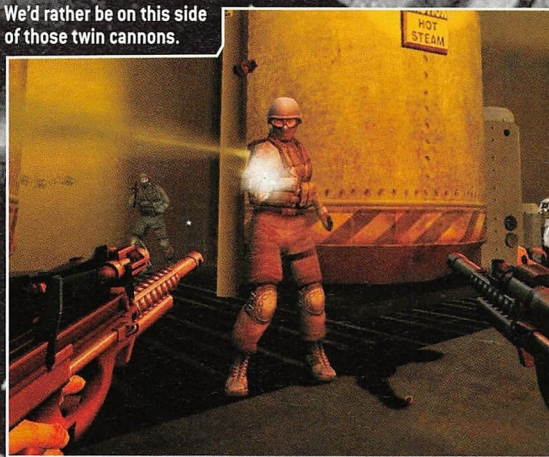
7 THERE'S A SENSE OF HISTORY

There will be a certain amount of cap-doffing to the original N64 *GoldenEye* game – still one of the greatest shooters on any console. The Cradle level (the final level of the original) will be included here as a multiplayer map. Can the team possibly match the quality of the original game? If they include a replica of the Facility level, we might be swayed.

"We've got the dragon but the handcuffs don't fit."



We'd rather be on this side of those twin cannons.



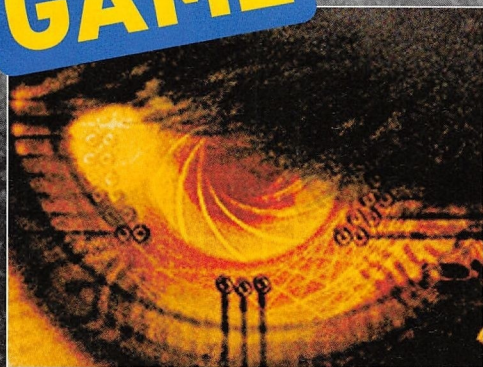
8 YOU TRAVEL THE WORLD

This being a Bond game, you can expect to do a fair bit of flying about the place, planning your dastardly crimes and schemes for world domination. The developers have gone to incredible lengths to give the game that international, jet-setting feel, with a vast array of foreign locales to get violent in. The Swiss Alps, a tropical island paradise, the Hoover Dam, the neon-drenched oriental bustle of Hong Kong, Fort Knox and ancient Egyptian pyramids – you'll travel the whole world and when you get there, you'll shoot loads of people in the face. Amazing perks these Bond villains get, eh?



An amazing kaleidoscope of gaming brilliance.

COVER GAME

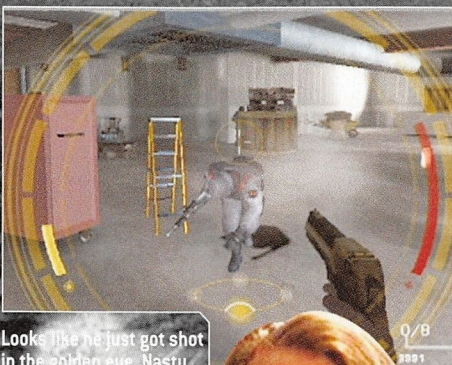


9 YOU HAVE A GOLDEN EYE

Your character is gifted with a real 'golden eye', and this unique orb has all manner of special powers. After all, what's a Bond villain without special powers? When it's fully upgraded it will be able to offer targeting, navigation, communications and biometric scan information, let you see through walls, control computers remotely, give you the power to throw enemies around and act as a force shield. Not a bad set of skills, we think you'll agree.



Golden eye. Two weapons. Your a killing machine!



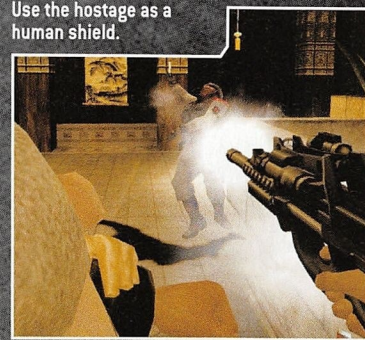
Looks like he just got shot in the golden eye. Nasty.

10 THERE'S PUSSY GALORE! SERIOUSLY.

It just wouldn't be a Bond game without an entourage of the world's most beautiful women to seduce and abandon. Even when you're playing the bad guy – a bad guy with one eye no less – you'll still be getting deep down and dirty with a variety of international supermodel honeys. Top of the list is the wonderful form of Pussy Galore, the choice Bond girl for all true Bond girl aficionados. Mmm, lovely, albeit in an old lady kind of way these days.



Use the hostage as a human shield.



This hostage won't stop that helicopter gunship.



11 YOU CAN TAKE HOSTAGES

You're a bad guy now, so doing bad guy stuff is most definitely on the cards. Aside from shooting whoever the hell you please, this also includes taking hostages, so they get shot in the ribs and you don't. Thus being nasty and saving your own skin all at once. We could get used to this villainy lark. Now where did we leave that electrified nuclear piranha tank?

He'd long dreamt of having the world's largest bath.

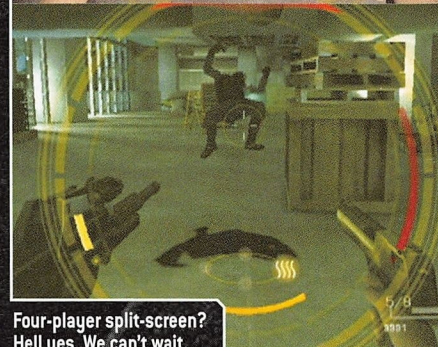
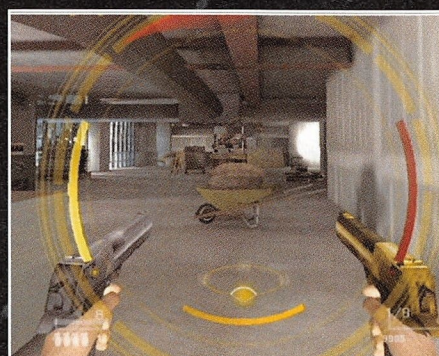


12 YOU CAN FIGHT UNDERWATER

Naturally, no Bond game would be complete without a healthy selection of exotic locations. Pushing the definition of 'exotic' further than it was ever meant to go, you can look forward to fighting in underwater bases. Expect sharks, spear guns and those smart underwater bike things with rocket launchers. Oh, and some more sharks too.

13 MULTI-MULTIPLAYER

The Multiplayer mode will offer all the split-screen blasting you'd expect, but on top of that there's also the 16-player online game to consider. There'll be over a dozen levels to battle across and your stats will be constantly updated to show where you stand in the ultimate bad guy league. You'll also get the chance to play as a variety of Bond super villains and gain the use of their unique evil powers – giant lasers, volcanoes, sharks, space-stations, an army of evil orange boiler suit-clad clones – all the usual stuff. Also, each level features a death trap, a feature of the level that will kill off the less wary player. Dr No's level features a dragon that breathes fire. Tempt your enemies to walk out in front of it and turn them into toast.



Four-player split-screen? Hell yes. We can't wait.

Yet another massive gun to kill the good guys with.



You won't be needing the scope from that range.



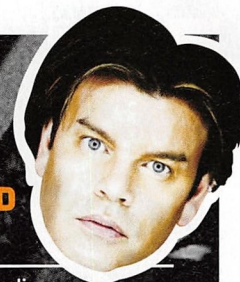
14 THERE ARE GUNS – LOTS AND LOTS OF GUNS

The selection of weapons available should offer something for everyone, with a range of more weird and wacky guns to balance the assortment of real weapons. Napalm guns, rocket launchers, a variety of machine guns and rifles and the LEGENDARY Golden Gun itself are among the selection on offer, along with a bunch of as yet unannounced weapons particular to the Bond baddies you face.



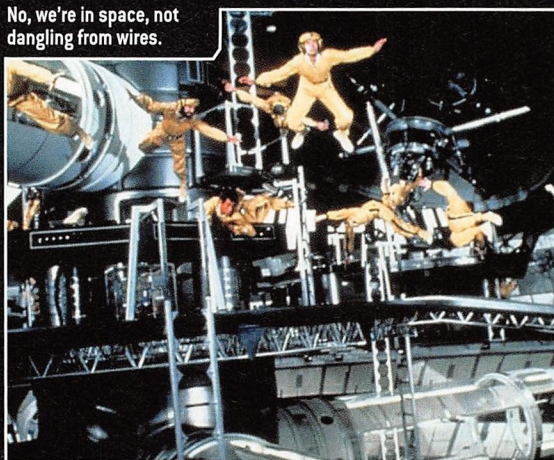
That gun is just obscene. We feel quite threatened.

15 PAUL OAKENFOLD DOES THE CHOONS



There's no unheard-of studio fiddler making limp tunes for the latest Bond vehicle, rather it's the mighty Paul Oakenfold who's twiddling the knobs on the soundtrack. Considering the man's mighty dance background, you can expect a considerably more upbeat soundscape than the usual Bond classical whimsy. Not only that but it's promised that the music will reflect your actions, getting bigger and badder when the guns come out. Excellent, providing of course that you like trance and not, say, folk music.

No, we're in space, not dangling from wires.

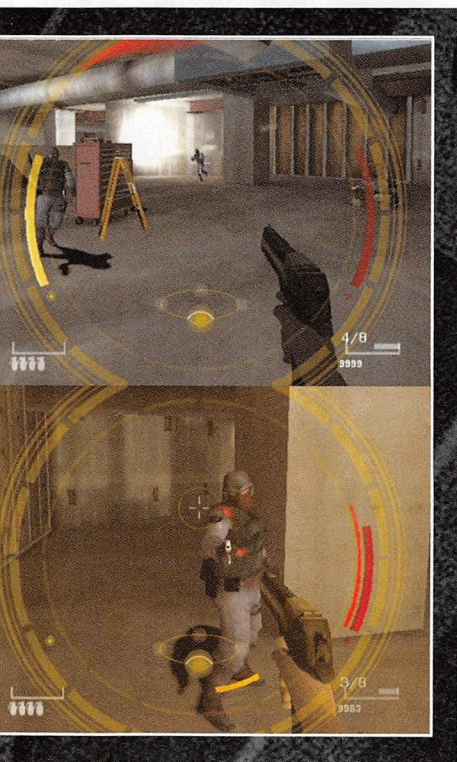


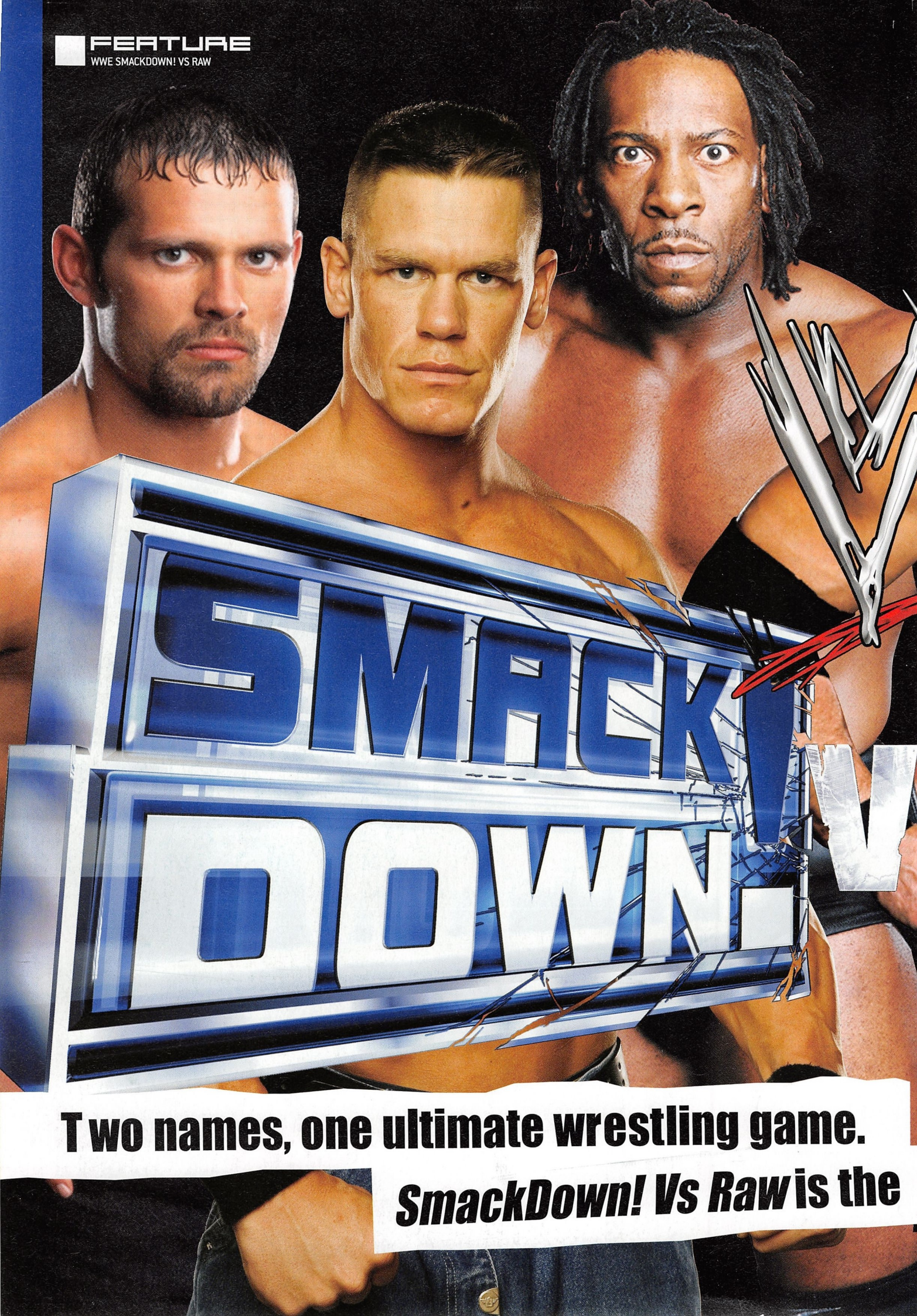
16 DO BATTLE IN SPACE

No Bond villain worth his salt would consider hatching a plot to take over the world without working an orbital space station in somewhere. So expect to find yourself fighting against the likes of Hugo Drax for control of some giant space laser, probably above a piranha pool or some molten lava, or something.

17 YOU CAN BECOME THE BADDEST OF THE BAD

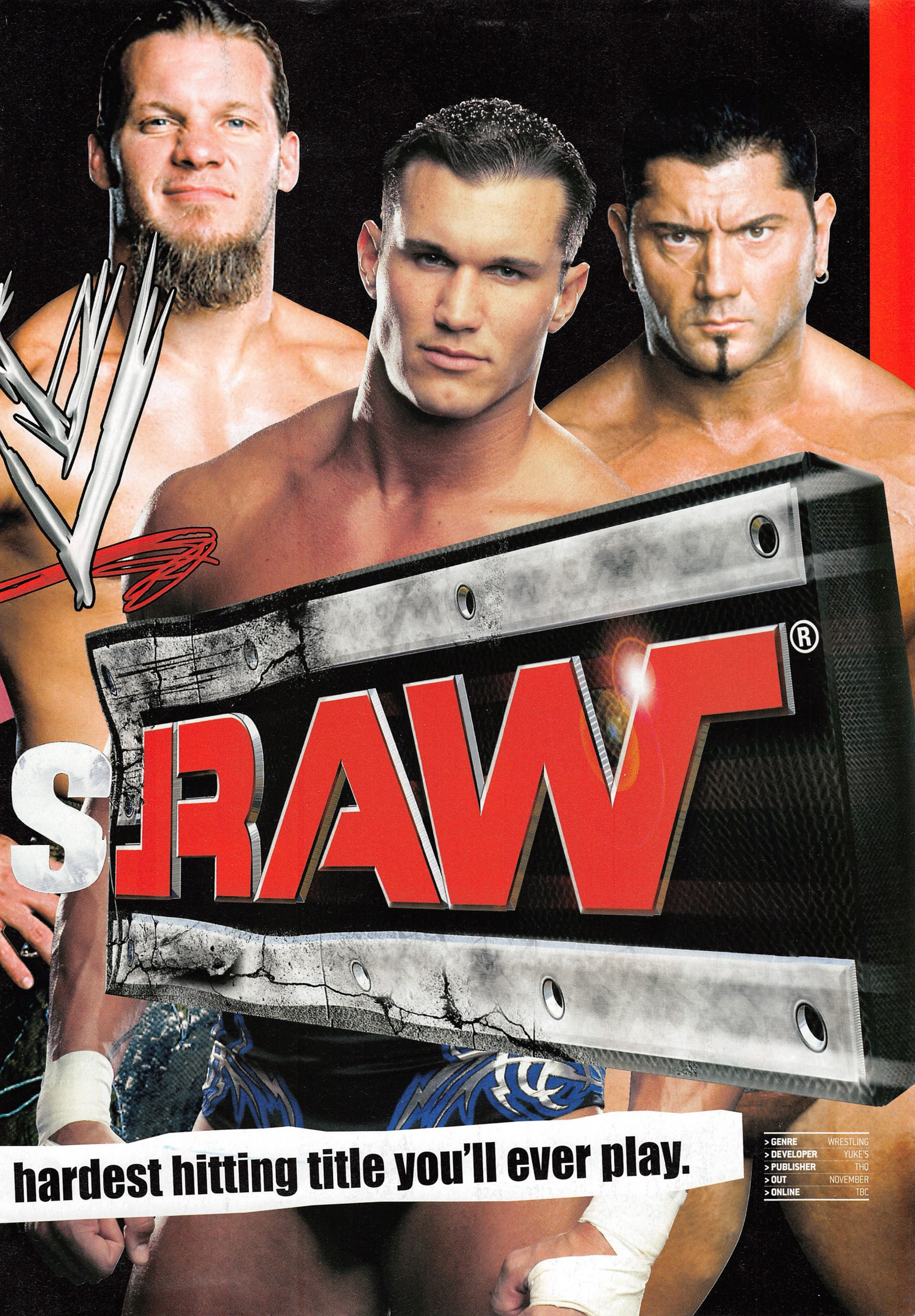
Just like in the single-player game, the multiplayer option, whether online or split-screen, is all about becoming the greatest Bond villain. The underworld of the Bond universe is always at war, with each super villain trying to out-villain the next and gain the top spot. The plot of the single-player campaign will have you starting out as an employee of Auric Goldfinger but we can't see you wanting to play second fiddle forever...





Two names, one ultimate wrestling game.

***SmackDown! Vs Raw* is the**



SMAKEDOWN! RAW[®]

hardest hitting title you'll ever play.

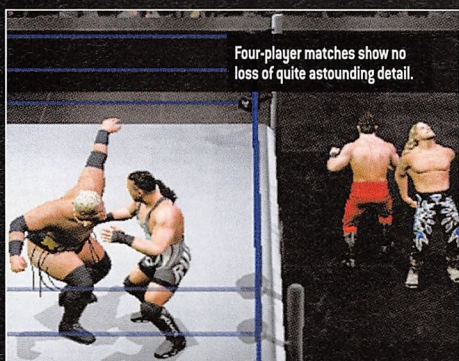
> GENRE	WRESTLING
> DEVELOPER	YUKE'S
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	TBC



"Oooh, you big perv!" Rikishi backs off from RVD's advances.

AH, SIR. PLEASE SIT DOWN. WOULD SIR LIKE A canapé? No? Sir is just in time to witness the brawl of the century. Two rival wrestling brands – *SmackDown!* and *Raw* – are about to steam into each other with the force of a thousand freight trains. The crash will result in the world's biggest, brashest and best brawler. Bar none. There seems to be a slight tent in Sir's trousers. Can we assume Sir is excited? Not to worry Sir, it's perfectly natural. So are we.

Of course, since we were last in wrestling country, so

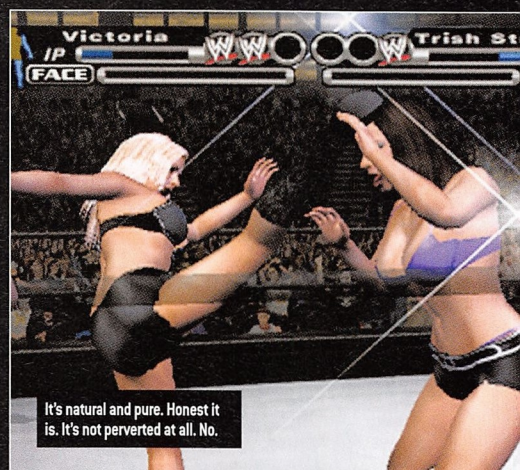


Four-player matches show no loss of quite astounding detail.

much has changed. Chris Benoit's the World Heavyweight Champ. Lesnar's gone. Edge is back. Meanwhile, the *WWE SmackDown! Vs Raw* game series has been changing too. Evolving, even. Gaps have been filled in, creases have been ironed out and everything looks and feels proper. *WWE SmackDown! Vs Raw* has proper commentary. It also has a full 3D crowd. Hair sits on shoulders rather than sweeping through them. Hands grip necks firmly instead of floating supernaturally around them.

But do you know what? We don't care about all that. Because this year, it's not just about the renovation work. Developer Yukes has concentrated all its efforts on making one central thing better: the wrestling. Forget the graphical improvements. Forget the extra superstars and the presentation. Forget the deeper Career mode – we'll get to all that later. All this, meaningful and beautiful and wonderful as it is, is really just window dressing. What's really changed this year is the amount of things you can do in the actual ring.

You'll realise this from the very start of each battle. Each match now begins in one of three new ways, giving you the chance to win dominance from the word go. Sometimes you'll be immediately hammering the buttons to wrestle your opponent to the ground. Other times,



It's natural and pure. Honest it is. It's not perverted at all. No.



Kane snaps another neck in his quest for job fulfilment. Bless!



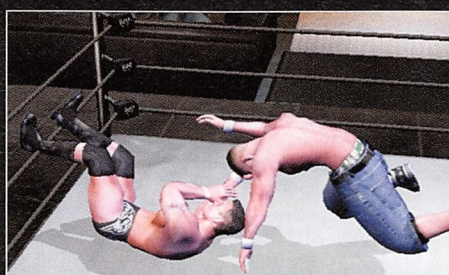
Expressions are clearer and movements more defined now.

IT'S ORTON VS CENA!

What happened when our two favourite *WWE* stars went at it.



>> Look! It's just like it is on the telly! Give someone a fat gold medal!



>> Cena gets in an early slam. Orton hides his face in shame and fear.



>> A choke hold catches Orton unawares. Is this match all going one way?

YOU STARTIN'?

Every fight now starts with one of these quickfire button battles.



TEST OF STRENGTH

Press the right combo of buttons as they appear on screen and you'll wrestle your opponent down. Get it wrong and you'll be the one writhing on the floor.



STARE-DOWN

Simply hit the X button when the signal is given. The quickest knocks down his rival. But hit X too early and your hit will be countered with humiliating results.



SHOVE BATTLE

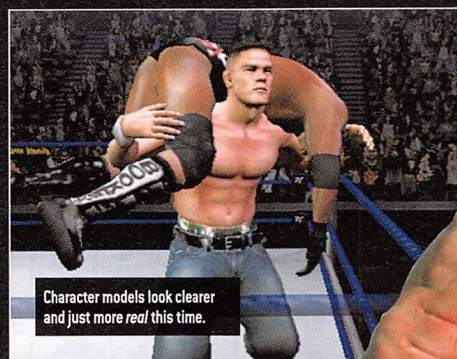
Push your enemy down to the canvas before he can do likewise to you and you'll have the immediate advantage over him.



Benoit gets smacked by a nasty double team. Bunch of bullies.



"No, you conga like this!" Rey Mysterio shows 'em how it's done.



Character models look clearer and just more real this time.

you'll need to press X first when it flashes on the screen to give your rival a massive smack. And sometimes you'll have to follow a sequence of button presses. The result? One of you will be squealing on the floor, right at the start. Think of it as a nitrous boost to speed up the start of a match.

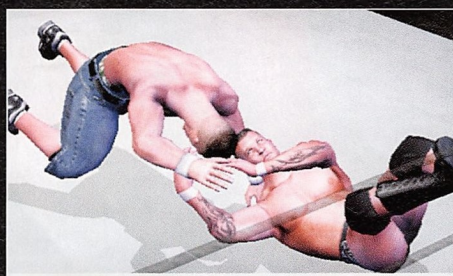
You can now trade punches at the turnbuckle too, thanks to a 'swingometer' that lets you have another go if you hit the button at exactly the right time. Get it wrong, and your rival gets a chance to hit you. See? It's just like the action beamed onto your telly. Counters work in a more realistic way too, with more animations to fill in last year's rather embarrassing jerks and twitches. Wrestlers don't suddenly float backwards when they counter a hit. Instead they'll duck, spin, jump or flip away just in time. During a disputed pindown you can actually argue with the ref, maybe winning you the time you need to keep your rival down for the count.

Individual events have also been given a massive dose of illegal steroids. For example, Royal Rumble >>>

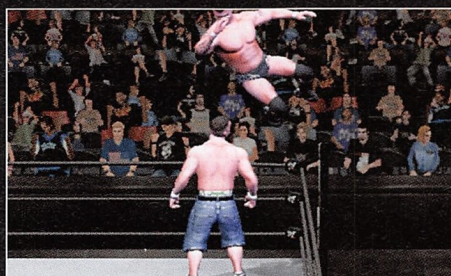
A-Train. The A stands for 'awfully unpleasant and hairy, isn't he?'



WWE SmackDown! Vs Raw >>



>> As Orton is slammed down again, he manages to counter the move.

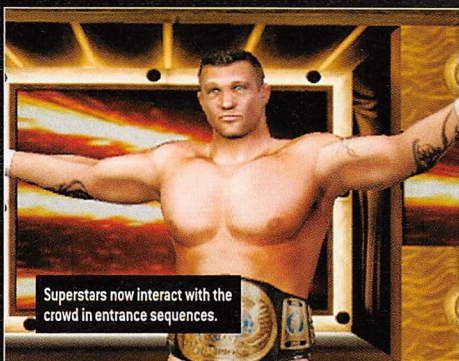
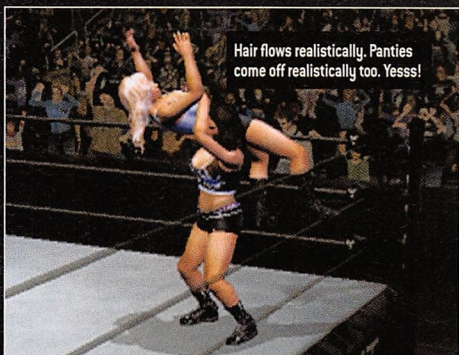


>> Cena gets up off the floor, but not in time to avoid Orton's splash.



>> The tables are turned! Cena lies bleeding while Orton laps up the glory.

WWE SmackDown! Vs Raw >>

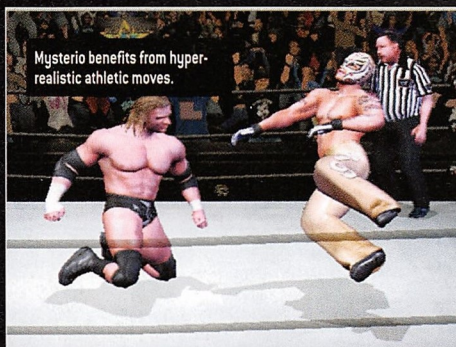
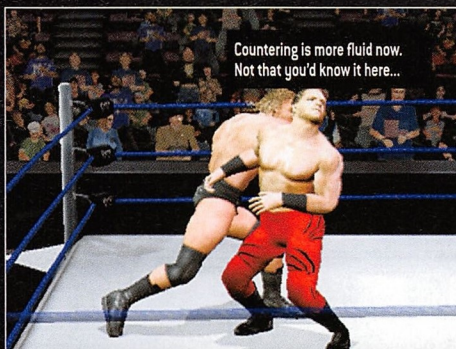


is now something far more than a just group of folks fighting in one ring. A special move is needed to get wrestlers thrown out of the squared circle, meaning you won't be able to simply smack them out of there. It's a contest so truly epic it makes *Troy* look like a bunch of trannies with rubber swords.

HEEL BE BACK

There's more shockwaves to come. First, and perhaps most potentially rewarding, is the adoption of a face/heel system. In plain English that means you can choose to play any wrestler as a good or bad guy, with rewards for acting in character and penalties if you don't. A new face/heel bar must be filled to trigger your character's most extreme moves.

Good guys will increase their face bar by countering and playing to the crowd. Bad guys get to beat up the ref,



// “So epic, it makes *Troy* look like a bunch of trannies with rubber swords.” //

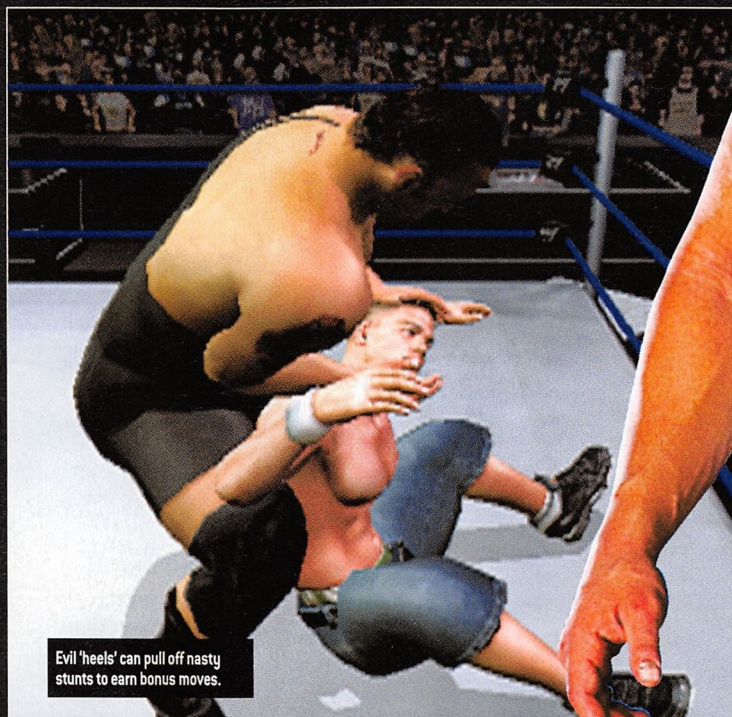
use illegal weapons, and cause as much chaos as they can. From what we've played of it, it really works too. Suddenly, you're really playing in character. It won't just feel good to make Kane argue with the ref over a disputed pin while his victim writhes in agony beneath him. It'll actually give you extra in-game power.

BELT HIM ONE

We're losing puff here, but we're not even halfway up the mountain of new features. The generous helping of Creation modes has got even bigger. In fact, short of inventing your own wrestling brand you can make just about anything. Pay-per-views can be made, saved and played through with every conceivable type of match. Belts can be created for championships and as we expect these days, there's even more detail to the Create a Superstar mode. By the way, when we say you can

create a belt, we mean you can literally *create* a belt. As well as choosing which wrestlers to fight, you have to design the champ's waistwear itself, right down to the nasty fake diamonds that it's studded with. You'll see it being brandished in the ring in all its tasteless glory, and of course your champ will get to wear it whenever he or she is on screen. What's more, you'll be able to see the belt become more valuable over time, as it gains more prestige each time you defend your title. That'll sort out the proper hard men from the one-legged wrestling wannabes...


Of course, these days PS2 wrestling isn't just about *SmackDown!* any more. It's just as much about rival screen splatterfest *WWE Raw*. Maybe more so, because *Raw* is





Olympic champ he may be, but Kurt Angle's still a bit of an ass.

WWE SMACKDOWN SAVIOURS #3

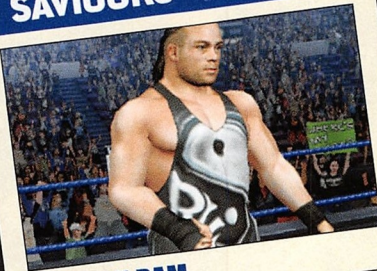


REY MYSTERIO

They call him: Mr 619
Finishing move: 619/West Coast Pop
Superstar Status: ★★★★★

A firm fan favourite and part of a massive wrestling family, Rey's showy athletic moves mean he's worth watching in every match.

WWE SMACKDOWN SAVIOURS #4



ROB VAN DAM

They call him: Mr Thursday Night
Finishing move: Van Daminator
Superstar Status: ★★★★★

From being a kind of pretend Jean-Claude Van Damme, he's now bigger than his namesake. In wrestling, anyway.

WWE SMACKDOWN SAVIOURS #5




BIG SHOW

They call him: Big Nasty Bastard
Finishing move: Chokeslam
Superstar Status: ★★★★★

So big, they had to use the word 'Big' as part of his actual name. Renowned for his wit outside the ring. And his weight inside it.

WWE RAW LORDS #1




CHRIS BENOIT

They call him: The Canadian Crippler
Finishing move: Crippler Crossface
Superstar Status: ★★★★★

A diehard professional at the beginning of his career peak, Benoit's a no-nonsense hero with great technical ability.

WWE RAW LORDS #2



RANDY ORTON

They call him: The Legend Killer
Finishing move: RKO
Superstar Status: ★★★★★

Famed [according to himself] for taking out some of the greatest of the last generation of wrestlers, Orton's massive right now.

WWE RAW LORDS #3



KANE

They call him: The Big Red Machine
Finishing move: Chokeslam
Superstar Status: ★★★★★

Available in mask and non-masked mode, Kane is as unstoppable in the game as he is in the real-life ring. Maybe more so.

WWE RAW LORDS #4



SHAWN MICHAELS

They call him: The Heartbreak Kid
Finishing move: Sweet Chin Music
Superstar Status: ★★★★★

The Kid may have seen better days but he's still a big draw and knows how to play the crowd with his own inimitable style.

WWE RAW LORDS #5

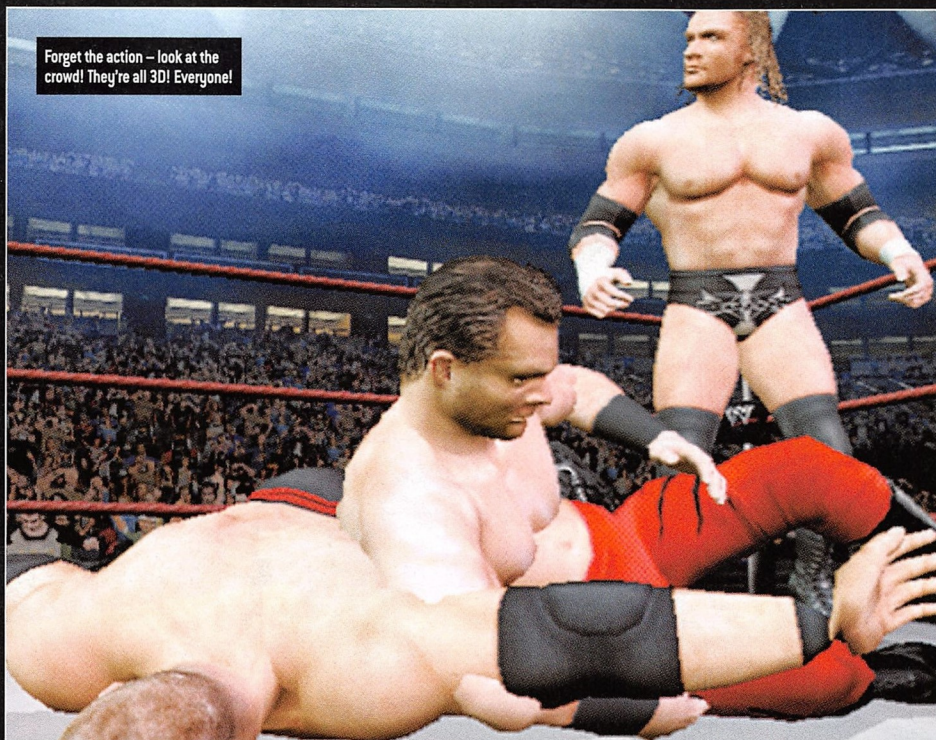


TRISH STRATUS

They call her: 100% Ass-kicking babe
Finishing move: Bulldog
Superstar Status: ★★★★★

More stacked than giant Jenga, Trish is one of the reasons we get up in the morning. (The other is Cinnamon Grahams.) Trish is a dish.

Forget the action – look at the crowd! They're all 3D! Everyone!



proving to be a much bigger audience draw these days. So when you fire up the game, the first thing you'll see is a screen asking you to "Select your brand". Choose *Raw* or *SmackDown!* as the mood takes you. The presentation of each show is faithfully recreated, although you can still select any wrestler from either show, no matter which presentation style you decide to opt for. If you don't fancy playing through the main Career mode, a new Mission mode fills the gap between. Starting with jobbing challenges to earn money, you'll work up to taking on the ring's hardest men for wads of cash. Use the cash to upgrade your star and unlock a host of extras, before going back into mission mode for even more money.

Right. Deep breath. Drink of water. Let's talk charisma. Charisma is a new stat that determines how much benefit you get from taunting and showboating.

Superstars with low charisma won't boost their smackdown bar much no matter how much waving and pointing they do. But if you're chock full of charisma, a simple gesture to the crowd will have the crowd jumping up and down in the aisles, and your bar will rise faster than Edge's medical expenses. All good.

BLOOD, SWEAT AND CHEERS

The bad news is that just like last year we're unlikely to hear the wrestlers themselves speak, thanks to legal disputes more complex than Chinese algebra. Still, the top 12 or so wrestlers are being given their own unique career storylines, and the others will have a kind of random mix of career-making fights and behind-the-scenes intrigue. A total of 45 current characters make up the roster, plus some amazing legends whose identities we couldn't beat out of Yukes, no matter how hard we



Be a good egg or a bad apple, and you'll unlock special moves.



Choose whether to play your superstar as a crowd-pleasing 'face' or a dastardly 'heel'. Play in the right way to unlock your most devastating moves.



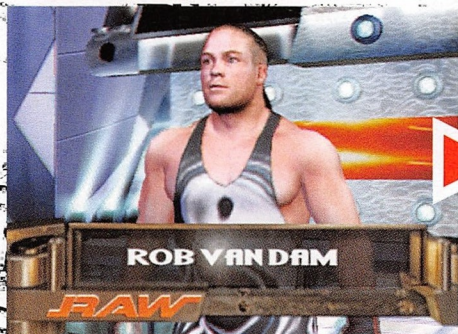
Heels can cause all sorts of chaos to increase their heel bar: striking refs, breaking rules, using weapons and generally cheating as much as they can.



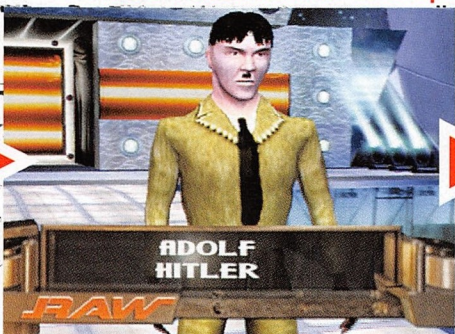
Faces increase their bar by sticking to the rules, showing off to the crowd and countering. They've got less to do, but their bar increases more each time to compensate.

ROB VAN DAM VS HITLER!

We made a monster with the improved Create a Superstar mode.



Rob Van Dam, ex-ECW superstar, fan favourite and now a member of the *SmackDown!* stable. We expect great things from him this year.



Adolf Hitler, leader of the German National Socialist party and one of the most reviled men in the entire world. Now that's what we call a heel.



"I'll annexe you like I annexed the Sudetenland!" cries the Fuhrer. Van Dam is unimpressed. He's been in the ring with Kane. He's seen true evil.



Rikishi - so intelligent, he has to have his name on his pants.



Watch your wrestler's expression change during matches.



Every sweaty, scanty under-wired costume in perfect detail.

// “Not just a flashy game with a wrestling theme. This is interactive *WWE*” //

tried. They kept winking and smiling and tapping their noses in a conspiratorial manner though. We're certainly going to see some massive, massive names from WWE mythology stepping into the ring.

Want more? We haven't even mentioned the extra helpings of facial animation. Or the 15 or so licensed tracks are being used to eke out the atmosphere. That's aside from each wrestler's individual theme music, of course. It's the first time 'real' music has been used in this way in the *SmackDown!* games. We're confident it will turn out to be strident lumberjack-shirted country-rock and mask-wearing metal though. Which is just as it should be.

This is a lot of new stuff. A lot. And it all

adds up to one thing. For the very first time, this isn't just a fun, flashy game with a wrestling theme. It's proper interactive *WWE*, this is. And if you don't think there's a difference, just wait until you play it. In short, it's going to rock your face right off...

FIRST OPINIONS

WWE SmackDown! Vs Raw is going to be HUGE. The massive avalanche of new game mechanics mean that we've got a gigantic amount of new innovations to look forward to – innovations that are genuinely going to change the way we play *SmackDown!* for good. Add in the amazing transformations in looks and detail, and fans and newcomers alike are going to go wild for this one. You have our permission to scream with joy. Go!

/JOFF BROWN



Thirty seconds in, and Hitler's on the turnbuckle. Van Dam begins to pound seven shades out of the luckless German dictator. Adolf's on the ropes and in real trouble.



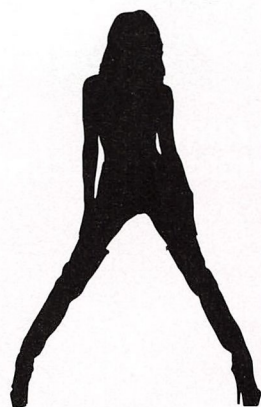
RVD picks up the fascist overlord and flings him against the opposite turnbuckle. The smackdown is about to be layeth! This'll teach him to invade Poland!



The only way to dispense with this filth is with the trademark Van Daminator spinning kick. Now that's what we call proper democracy in action, folks!



BAN THIS SICK



FILTH!



18 reasons why sick sex-games are set to degrade our console with a tirade of FILTH.
Playboy: The Mansion and *Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude* must be banned!

LEISURE SUIT
LARRY
 — MAGNA CUM LAUDE —

18. LARRY'S SICK NAME

Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude, eh? Don't think we don't know what they mean! It's a thinly-veiled sexual reference – we know it, the makers know it, and by God the children! The children will know it too!



17. PLAYBOY'S SILHOUETTE SHAME

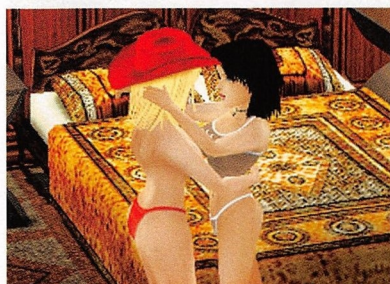


This promotional artwork doesn't appear to show any sort of house, instead forcing a disgraceful image of nudity upon us. What if a young child – keen on architecture, perhaps – bought *Playboy: The Mansion* expecting it to contain mansions? He'd be disappointed – and mentally scarred for life.



16. LARRY'S DEGRADING CLOSE-UPS

Do you know what this image is saying? It's saying women are nothing more than ROUND LUMPS OF SOFT MEAT to be motion captured jumping up and down for the pleasure of the 16-34 male demographic. If we were women, or knew any, we'd certainly be offended by this gross objectification of the female form.



15. PLAYBOY'S LIPSTICK LESBO SHAME



Oh what a surprise. The two girls kissing each other here are both attractive young ladies. As proud supporters of the lesbo community here at PSW, we're disgusted at once again seeing the same old clichéd image of lezzers forced upon us by a male-dominated media. This industry really is rotten to the core.



14. PLAYBOY'S DEBAUCHERY



Couples cavorting in a swimming pool? Same-sex pairs openly flaunting their behaviour? The man on the right also appears to be grimacing in what can only be the early stages of self abuse. Astonishing depravity.



13. LARRY IN FULL NUDITY SHOCK

We have censored this image FOR YOUR OWN GOOD. Not only are both of the lady's chest bits on display in *Leisure Suit Larry*, but you can also see her... her... front bottom area! This isn't some seedy PC game available only on the internet! It's a PlayStation2 game that'll be on sale in shops down YOUR street!



12. PLAYBOY PROSTITUTION

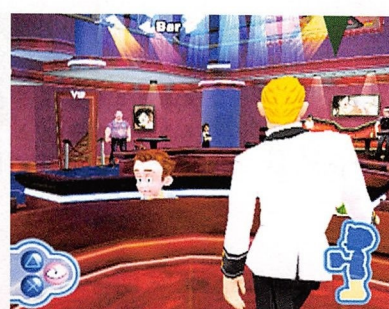


Are we really supposed to think that these ladies are here of their own free will? Of course they're not. They're little more than WHORES, women of the night who should be in prison or a filthy little room in Amsterdam, certainly not fully endorsed by Sony as they peer out of our TV screens.



11. LARRY CORRUPTING INNOCENCE

What image sums up the wholesomeness of American teenagers more than pretty young cheerleaders? Look at them there, all innocently exercising. So why is Larry looking at the leader's chest? Is nothing sacred? This game is ramming sex into everything. The government ought to keep a list of all the people who buy this sick filth.



10. LARRY GLAMORISING ALCOHOL

Larry likes to get drunk, because Larry thinks getting drunk is the only way to have a good time. Look at him – he's little more than a child. What sort of signal is this sending out to the youth? It's saying something like "getting drunk on eight pints of Stella is cool". Honestly kids, it isn't – and we've got the bruised limbs to prove it.



9. PLAYBOY WASTING LIFE AWAY



We've all had periods of unemployment where getting dressed has seemed pointless, but including such a negative message in a game aimed at impressionable teens? Sheer madness! Here, mansion owner Hugh Heffner is greeting a visitor, dressed only in a gown and seedy slip-on shoes. Clearly he's given up hope of gaining meaningful employment – it's like Keating's in power all over again.



8. LARRY SEXUALISING TREES

Even Mother Nature is not safe from being tarred by Larry's sex brush! See how the tree – the beautiful giant that breathes life into our planet – is portrayed as little more than a desperate, grabbing lump of wood that craves meaningless sex. How dare they involve the gentle tree in their perverted little fantasy game. The nerve of the people behind this sad, depraved project is unbelievable.



7. PLAYBOY SHAME REVEALED



We infiltrated the real *Playboy* mansion to take these shocking photos. Not only are the ladies dressed only in underwear, but, upon closer inspection, the underwear would appear to be PAINTED ON. If a rainstorm was to hit the event the result would be horrific. You shouldn't be encouraging this sort of behaviour by purchasing the game.



6. PLAYBOY UNDERWEAR REMOVAL



Has gaming really sunk to such a low that it's acceptable to see women – some not even wearing pants at all – removing each other's clothes? Is this entertainment or just exploitative filth aimed at the sort of men who deliberately walk slowly up stairs to look at the bottoms of ladies?



5. LARRY TALKING TO STRANGERS

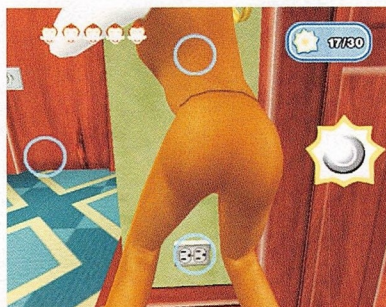
Look at him. Talking to a strange woman. She could be a murderer, or a gypsy woman wanting to steal children to sell into slavery. If a child was to play this game and get the impression that it's okay to talk to skanky women in bars, then actually go and talk to a skanky woman in a bar, who knows what sort of kidnap/murder scenario could unfold.



4. PLAYBOY PRAISING UNREALISTIC BODIES

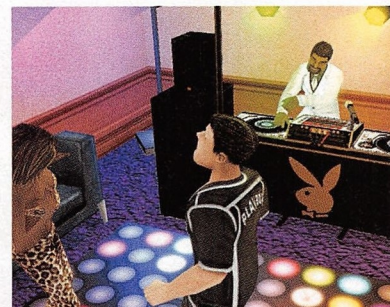


As if girls didn't have enough pressure to look tall and thin thanks to *Jamellia*, now all the boys will be expecting girls to feature perfectly spherical breasts only possible to create in the depraved virtual world of the game programmer. They will also expect every woman to be blonde and have a stomach like Denise Lewis. Sick.



3. LARRY'S FILTHY VOYEURISM

The thing that really shocks us is that there's just NO NEED for it. Could this scene not be portrayed with a more flattering and less explicit camera angle? Could the lady there perhaps wear trousers that don't let you see what she had for breakfast? Why must the camera zoom right in and, worse, still, encourage virtual spanking?



2. PLAYBOY'S PROVOCATIVE DANCING

Look at her, touching herself and flicking her hair like she's an actual real woman, not some sick game plaything created for the amusement of perverts. Is this the sort of strong, positive, female role model the girls of today need? Is it really okay to tell teenage girls that it's acceptable to go through life waving your hair to get what you want?

She's probably high on illegal amphetamines.



1. PLAYBOY'S DEAD-EYED STARS

She's dead on the inside and she knows it. Her mouth may be smiling, but her blank, empty eyes speak volumes. But you can help. Join our petition to ban *Playboy: The Mansion* and *Leisure Suit Larry* before they arrive on our shores – and before it's too late. Do you want YOUR wife, daughter or sister ending up as dead-eyed as poor old Shirley here? Sign the form and send it in. You can help build a better, safer tomorrow for all of our children.

BAN THESE FILTHY SEX GAMES!

I, the undersigned, demand these two SICK so-called games are prevented from being released before they do any more damage. There's no need for it, they're damaging the family-oriented nature of PlayStation2 and above all, they're DIRTY. I will be contacting my local Member or Parliament forthwith. An apology from those responsible for all the offence caused thus far would also be nice.

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

SIGNED: _____

Send your completed forms to: Ban these filthy sex games, PSW, 78 Renwick St. Redfern, NSW 2016.

Unclean! This sort of FILTH simply MUST be stopped!

From the makers of Timesplitters!

"WILL BLOW YOUR MIND"

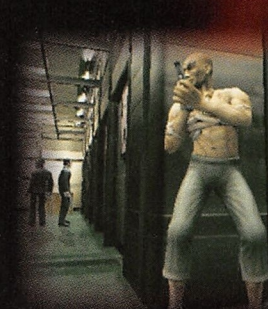
Official PS2 Magazine

"A GROUND-BREAKING ACTION CONSPIRATORIAL EPIC"

Official Nintendo Magazine

SECOND SIGHT™

As John Vattic, experience an intense psychological journey where the past plays into the hands of the future, a mind-blowing mix of stealth, gunplay and incredible psychic powers.



Stealth



Telekinesis



Projection

Psi Blast

- Engaging dual-timeline blockbuster story, taking you from top secret research facilities to the wastelands of Siberia
- 7 Incredible psychic abilities: Telekinesis, Healing, Charm, Psi Attack, Psi Blast, Projection and Possession
- Bend reality to your will with fully interactive physics
- Combine psi powers, weapon combat and stealth, to solve any situation

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PlayStation 2

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REVIEWS

Burnout 3 finally speeds on to PS2 and we vow never to play another racing game ever again. Except *Juiced*.



064 BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN
Fact: only half of team PSW can drive.
Fact: after playing *Burnout 3*, we're convinced that this is in fact a good thing.

PSW RATINGS

The PSW scoring system is designed to make your buying decisions simple. Here's how it works.

> 10/10	ESSENTIAL
> 9/10	BRILLIANT
> 8/10	RECOMMENDED
> 7/10	GREAT
> 6/10	DECENT
> 5/10	AVERAGE
> 4/10	POOR
> 3/10	VERY DISAPPOINTING
> 2/10	BLOODY RUBBISH
> 1/10	AVOID AT ALL COSTS

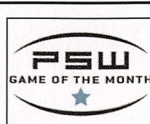
LET'S NOT MINCE WORDS HERE: *Burnout 3* is the best arcade racer ever made. It is so masterfully designed, so brilliantly executed, so breathtakingly fast... I just can't think of enough hyperbolic adjectives to describe its genius. Actually, that's not true at all. I could sit here all day waxing reverent about Criterion's latest masterpiece. But I won't. Instead, I'll direct you to our lovely big review starting on p. 64.

And then there's *Juiced*. Car-modding and illegal street racing games seem to be a dime a dozen these days, but that's just fine by us because every game we've played in the genre thus far has been really bloody good. *Juiced* is really bloody good. Excellent race physics, excellent customisation options, excellent presentation... it's all super dandy. Hell, the paint-a-car mode is almost a game in itself!

But *Silent Hill 4*... good god, Konami, what have you done to this once magnificent franchise? In my estimation, the entire series has been getting progressively worse with each instalment. The same thing better not happen to *Pro Evo* or there'll be Hell to pay!

Oh, speaking of Hell, remember to check out our *Catwoman* review. It's not quite as bad as an eternity of endless agony, but it's close!

/ DANIEL STAINES



PSW GAME OF THE MONTH
The Game of the Month Award is what it is, the title that in PSW's opinion is the essential purchase of the month. Go and buy it. Now. Now!



PSW MUST BUY
Typically awarded to games that score 8/10 or above, representing one of the best in its genre. Simply, if you like this type of game, you 'must buy'. Clever eh?



076 *Silent Hill 4: The Room*

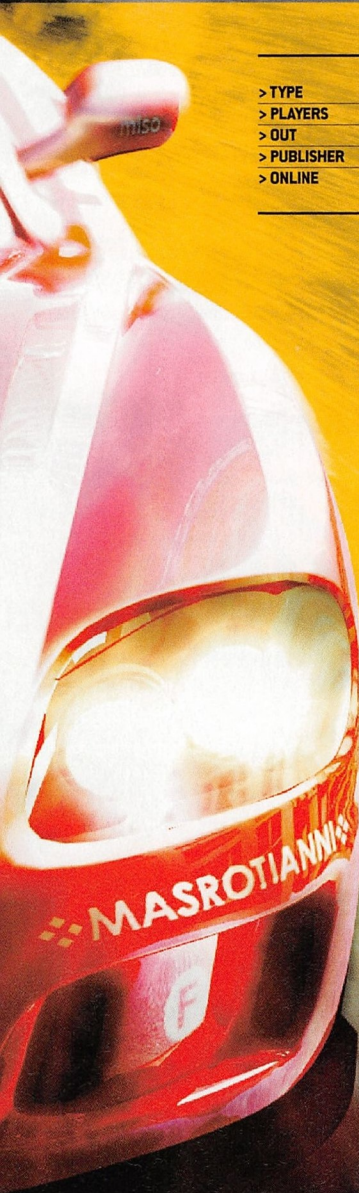


080 *Psi-Ops*

NEW RELEASES

- 064 BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN
- 070 JUICED
- 076 SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM
- 080 PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY
- 082 CRIMSON SEAS 2
- 083 CATWOMAN





> TYPE	RACING
> PLAYERS	1-6
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	EA
> ONLINE	YES

BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

Fasten your seatbelt and hold on tight as we turn the key and burn the tyres off the fastest arcade racer ever to grace PlayStation2.

BUY PLASTERS. BIG FAT SWATHES OF NICE, CUSHIONING

plaster. Because your thumb is going to be scarred for life by *Burnout 3*. More precisely, the bottom of your thumb joint where you hammer the X button, leaving the actual pad of the thumb to tap Square. That patch of skin is going to be red, raw and quite possibly bleeding. You won't notice. Because *Burnout 3* is better than Jesus and faster than God. It's more beautiful than your wife and more precious than your children. It's quite simply the best racing game we've ever played.

Didn't like *Burnout 1* and *2*? Doesn't matter. Don't like cars? Doesn't matter. Hate video games? Then a) what are you doing reading *PSW*, chump and b) it still doesn't matter. By a perfect combination of speed, style and most of all, sheer adrenaline-fuelled playability, *Burnout 3* transcends everyday criticisms to attain video game perfection. Do you get the sense we quite liked it?

STEEL DREAMS

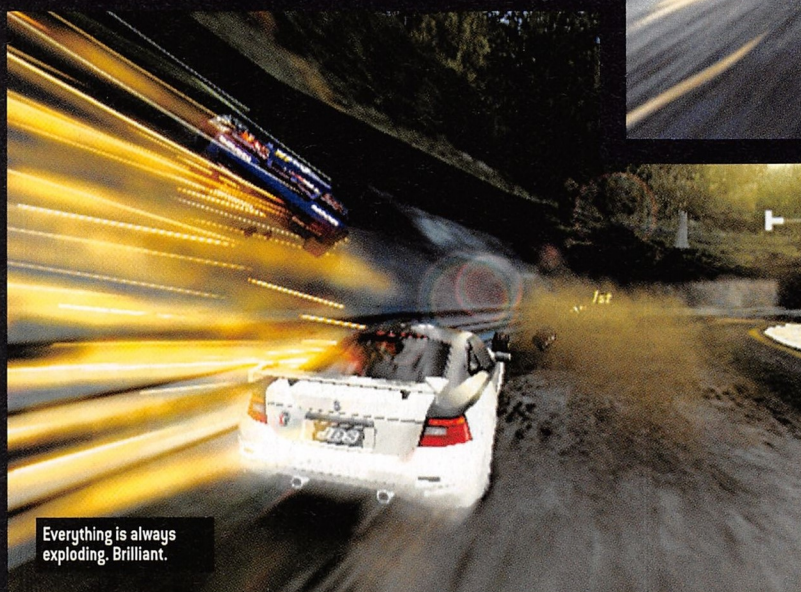
Burnout 3 is a racing title. What makes it different from the rest is that it is a) really, really fast, no really, and b) offers amazing, movie-style collisions every time you mess up. As in previous installments you go really fast by filling your boost bar. You fill your boost bar by driving in the wrong lane of the road through the cityscapes that make up most of the tracks, narrowly missing oncoming cars, drifting round corners like a pissed-up Colin McRae and generally driving as recklessly as possible. Essentially, the more dangerously you drive, the faster you get to go. And the faster you get to go, the more stupidly you get to drive. It's the world's best ever vicious circle. The screen blurs at the edges, the amazing courses disappear into a velocity-induced haze and you find you're concentrating on the tiny portion of the screen where you'll be able to spot oncoming traffic. It's a rush like no other.



A violent four way battle. Disaster surely looms from every angle.



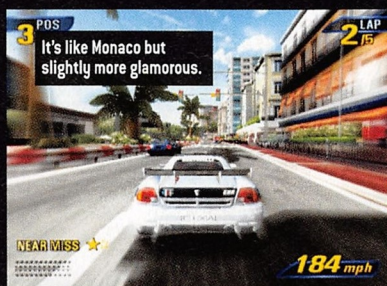
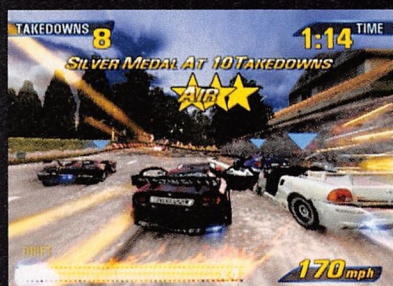
A subliminal bit of in-game advertising. It's all from EA.



Everything is always exploding. Brilliant.



The scenery is often breathtakingly lovely.



It's like Monaco but slightly more glamorous.



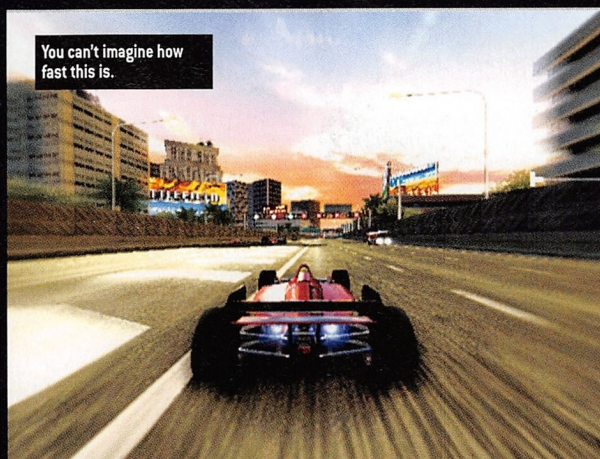
Missing Gold by less than a second. Damn!

◆ If you've played *Burnout 1* and *2*, all this will come as absolutely no surprise. But *Burnout 3* offers something new: the chance to knock other cars out of the way, increasing your boost and putting you in the lead. They're called Takedowns – hence the subtitle. We were suspicious of this concept at first. Car combat? Isn't that code for 'brown and grey half-assed attempt at adolescent American wish-fulfilment set in a Post-Apocalyptic Nightmare'? Doesn't it, in fact, have a massive whiff of 6/10 about it?



Rest easy. As you can see from the shots, *Burnout 3* doesn't have you trundling around arenas, firing machine guns or wearing embarrassing spiky leather crotch protectors. It doesn't even make you listen to Slipknot. Instead, the car crushing has been skillfully built into the racing part of the game. Most of the time, if you hit another car you'll be treated to one of *Burnout's* amazing crash animations. But if it's a race rival, you get to try and muscle them off the road using any dirty tactics you can think of. The more vicious the Takedown, the more boost you steal from them. Swerve into them hard enough, or push them into oncoming traffic, or dispose of them in any one of a million other wince-inducing ways, and you'll trigger a Takedown. The action will freeze for a couple of seconds as the other car sails into the air in pieces. Your boost bar is not only filled but also extended, and you've taken a competitor out of the race for a crucial few seconds. Most importantly, it lets you go very, very fast. Like stealth kills in *Metal Gear Solid 2* or

massive combos in *Tony Hawk's*, Takedowns just have something about them that make you smile. They're the perfect mixture of aggression, spectacle and reward; taste it and you'll find yourself hopelessly addicted straight away, racing up to other cars, desperate to knock them off the road. At first, it's pretty easy, but as you move on to beefier cars every Takedown has to be planned in a split-second or you'll do no more than trade paint or wing mirrors with your rival. Fortunately, there's a whole mode called Road Rage dedicated to smashing as many other cars off the street within a set time limit. And for those of you who love the smell of splintered metal in the morning, you'll be glad to know that Crash mode – in which you propel your vehicle into a traffic set-piece to cause as much chaos as possible – has been fully spruced up, and expanded so it's a large part of the Career mode. Engineering the biggest crashes possible is still as much fun as ever, but it's also a complex kind of puzzle game in its own right, where you need to work out the best 'chain reaction'.



"THE MORE DANGEROUSLY YOU DRIVE, THE FASTER YOU GET TO GO. AND THE FASTER YOU GO, THE MORE STUPIDLY YOU GET TO DRIVE."



The finish looms into view. Can we have another go now?



That 162mph will soon be up to at least 200mph.

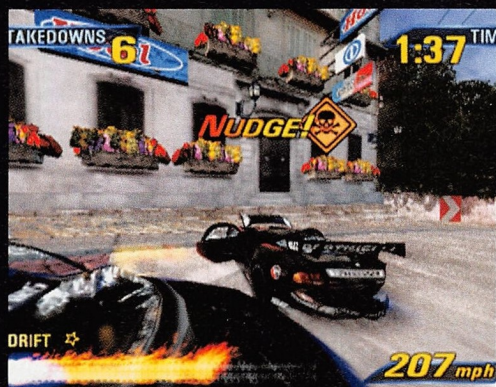
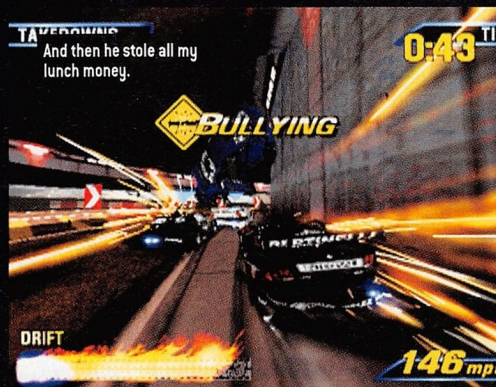


GOT A NEW MOTOR?

The low-down on all the latest models from the *Burnout 3* garage.



COMPACT	MUSCLE	COUPE	SPORTS	SUPER	SPECIAL
The lowest of the low to learn the ropes with. Still faster than the fastest cars in most 'normal' games though. Faster than: A greased ballbearing penalty kick by Roberto Carlos.	These souped-up monsters have a tendency to drift, and are a step up in the speed stakes too. Faster than: A streak of lightning with a pair of Nike Bowermans on.	These flashy models increase the speed, but don't give you much weight to push rivals around with. Faster than: A speeding lentil phaal through a white-hot rectum.	Now we're into professional territory. To handle these babies you'll need the reflexes of a gunslinger. Faster than: A comet on a lifetime's supply of vodka and Red Bull.	By the time you unlock these sleek, overclocked beasts your digits will be aching and your eyes will be bleeding. Faster than: Superman winding back time by flying round the Earth.	The oddball cars. The trucks, the F1 looky-likeys, the insanely, stupidly fast cars you'll never be able to control. Faster than: 12000bpm Cornish gabba psy-trance. On fast forward.





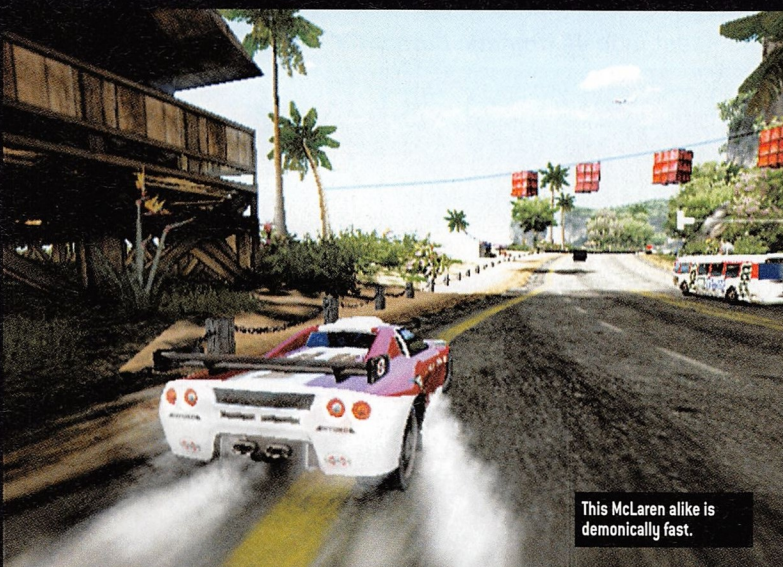
Which is the best way to play multiplayer *Burnout 3*?



This is a serious question. With a Killer Online mode, the good old split-screen's supremacy is being challenged here. Racing online is an amazing thrill, and you

get a screen all to yourself. On the other hand, you don't get to actually see the person you just took down. Which means that, thanks to the fact that having half the screen looks

every bit as good as playing on your own, we're plumping for split-screen multiplayer mode. That said you should still think seriously about buying a network adaptor.



BETTER TO INFINITY AND NO RETURNS

One of the amazing things about *Burnout 3* is the level of improvement over the last two games in the series. *Burnout 2* was a fine example of arcade racing at its best, well worthy of the 10/10 we awarded it way back in issue 34. And yet *Burnout 3* does everything so much better, it makes *Burnout 2* look very old-fashioned indeed. Examples? The graphics were very good before, but now they're simply unparalleled in the whole history of gamesdom. The crashes looked pretty sweet before. Now

every single collision is a visual orgasm of splintering metal and glass that makes you wonder how other games get away with anything less. The gameplay in *Burnout 2* was slick, speedy and endlessly amusing. The gameplay in *Burnout 3* is twice as wide and three times as deep. An undead army of John Donne's couldn't come up with enough off-colour metaphors to describe the sheer sexiness of *Burnout 3*. You couldn't go this fast in other games, even if you were falling from space attached to a set of diver's weights and a rocket.



Another one of the stunning effects.



You thought *Gran Turismo* had nice trees. Look at these!



Even with all this glorious, beautifully well-trimmed mayhem, *Burnout 3* could have been a flawed classic. After all, every game has its faults, right? For instance, when you cause a Takedown, the camera spins round to show you the car getting wrecked in glorious destructo-vision. Then the camera swooshes back round to put you back in the driving seat. This would have caused troubles in a lesser game, as the game plunges you right back into the action. But not here. *Burnout 3* gives you a tiny bit of extra leeway if you hit a car a second or so after a



Only a second? A measly second? You'll need more than that.



“ONLINE, *BURNOUT 3* FEELS LIKE IT IS MORE CONCERNED WITH YOU HAVING FUN THAN WHO WINS AND WHO LOSES.”

cutaway to a crash. A minuscule detail, maybe, but it's this attention to detail that makes *Burnout 3* such a gas to play.

And you can find this sense of smoothed edges everywhere in the game, if you look hard enough. Just as you feel you're getting a handle on the way the cars work, you'll unlock completely new types that will once more challenge your abilities. If you feel you've been stuck in a rut for a while, you'll find you've just earned 100 more *Burnout* points and unlocked another demonic speedmobile. Although all the cars are copy cat versions of licensed cars, the level of detail and shine is great enough to let you forget it. Almost, anyway.

AUTO EROTIC

As we've already mentioned, when you crash – well, magic happens. Hold down R1 – the same button you use to boost – and the impact is slowed right down, letting you see every tiny detail. Tiny fragments of glass stop shooting off your windows and suddenly spin lazily outward. The screech of metal on metal becomes a low, ominous drone. And the cars waltz through the air, meeting in a perfectly rendered union of

twisted metal destruction.

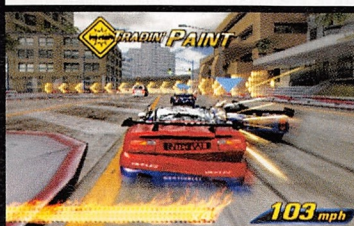
What's more, this is not simply the winning splash in the PS2 graphical pissing contest. It's actually a crucial part of the game. Because while you've got R1 held down, you can ever-so-slightly guide the car in the direction you want it to go. How is this of any practical use? Well, if there's a rival coming up behind, swerving to avoid your spinning, sparking wreck, you can subtly guide your car into it and cause it to crash. Presto – instead of messing up, you've redeemed yourself, filled your boost bar with fiery goodness and shown everyone that you're actually rather wicked at *Burnout 3* after all.

In fact, some of the game's tensest moments aren't when you're dodging traffic on the wrong side of the road at 200mph. They're when you're inching your way towards a detested rival in mid-air slo-mo, desperate to smack them off the road, knowing it will make all the difference between air-punching victory and head-slapping defeat. Although this 'aftertouch' is invaluable in any competitive race, it really comes into its own in Crash mode. Here, it's simply essential to guide your car into bonuses and avoid the 'heartbreaker' score-halving icons.



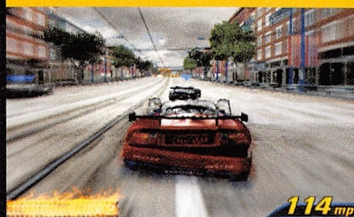
PLAYING DIRTY

Steal boost from other cars by hitting them? Sounds good to us!



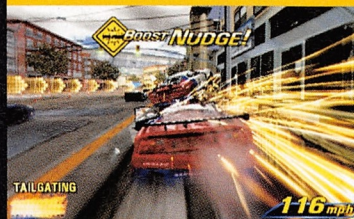
TRADIN' PAINT

Nice try, son. But rubbing up against other cars won't do much more than steal a tiny lick of boost.



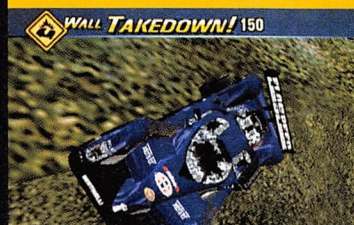
TAILGATING

It's the easiest way to hit them, but it's hardly the most skilful. Still, it gives you the boost you need to get in front.



SHUNTING

This is more like it. A good hard shunt can send a rival careering into traffic or just steal their precious, precious boost.



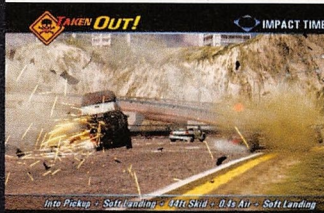
TAKEDOWN!

Ah, Takedowns. Amazing. Knock a car off the road and you'll increase the size of your boost bar. You'll actually make it bigger too.

And there's more. Split-screen multiplayer looks astonishingly good, but it's online where *Burnout 3* really shines. The ingenuity of the design is incredible. This will be the first online game ever to feature 'catch up logic.' For the Road Rage mode to work at all, the players must be tightly bunched up. Therefore, if you get too far ahead or behind, the game will push or pull you back into the pack for some more argy-bargy. The net effect is that *Burnout 3* feels like it's more concerned with you having fun than who wins and who loses – and that's the greatest compliment we could bestow upon it. It's this kind of maturity and forward thinking, seen *almost* everywhere in the game that propels it from being simply brilliant to being indisputable genius. If only everyone else

SO MUCH MORE!

Even with all this space, we haven't had room to mention this little lot!



SEMIS!

Hit a semi-trailer and its payload spunks out on to the street, causing no end of chaos. Hit one head-on at over 200mph and the results are simply astonishing.



FLYING!

The game 'cheats' to make crashes look so good by hurling your car in the air whenever you hit anything. It also times your 'airtime'. Frankly awesome.



ISLANDS!

The game begins primarily in brightly-lit urban cityscapes, moving into open countryside. The beauty of some of the later island levels defies description.



Formula One cars in the jungle. You certainly won't see this in any other game.



making online games could get their asses into gear and follow suit. Gamers without a network adaptor needn't feel left out though — they are sure to be more than gratified by the endless single player possibilities on offer.

FASTER THAN THAT

It seems a bit nasty to mention the few tiny grains of criticism we have with the game, a bit like kicking Charlize Theron out of bed for eating chips. But there are a couple of things. One, the music. It's all indie rock by the likes of the Vines and Modest Mouse. Obviously, straight-ahead driving rock works better than laid-back hip-hop, choral chants or Chilean pan pipe music for a racing game, but we would have welcomed a wider selection of styles. Still, it fits perfectly with the action, even if it's not quite what you'd

have chosen yourself. And the DJ who gives you hints on the tracks, SSX 3 style, can get a tad annoying too. Oh, and... nope. That's it. Everything else in *Burnout 3* is as near to perfection as we mere mortals can hope for.

By the way, there's something we ought to make clear. The version of *Burnout 3* we played was complete — because we don't review games that aren't. So you can be sure that what we've seen will make it onto the shelves and onto your screen too. We're not 'guessing' or 'hoping' that certain features will make it into the game. We're simply telling you that *Burnout 3* is video game gold. By the mere fact of its existence, *Burnout 3* has made the planet Earth about 16% more interesting. And that's not something that happens every day.

/JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS	DOWNERS
> Best at speed	> Real cars would've been nice
> Best at spectacle	> Indie rock may annoy
> Best at smashes	> Smug DJ certainly will
> Best at style	> Just buy it, okay?

GRAPHICS > You've never seen such gorgeousness **10**

SOUNDS > Scintillating crash sounds are second to none **9**

GAMEPLAY > The best arcade racer on PS2 to date **10**

OVERALL SCORE
Just when we're swamped with tasty looking car games, along comes *Burnout 3* to raise the bar so damn high, we can't see any of them catching up. Sell your liver for \$99, limp to the shops and buy it.

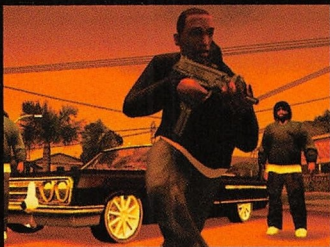
10

ROCKSTAR GAMES
PRESENTS

grand theft auto San Andreas

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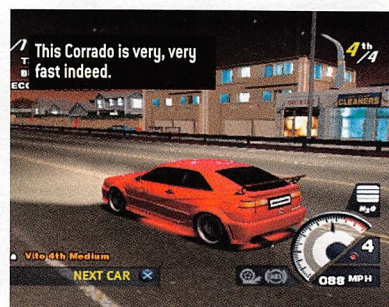
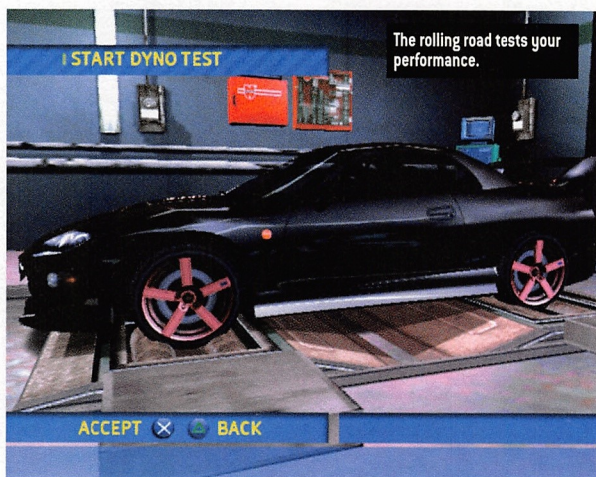
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PlayStation®2



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JUICED

Not just for *Redline*-reading nitro-bandits, *Juiced* provides a surprisingly adult take on the world of modded-car street racing.



> TYPE	RACING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
> DEVELOPER	JUICE GAMES
> ONLINE	YES

THE PLAYSTATION2 HAS ALWAYS BEEN BLESSED with a gigantic collection of racing titles. Looking through the selection on the shelves of their favoured game shop, few prospective customers, if any, have been heard to mutter "Well, that lot are alright but what I really wanted was a driving game." With more and more excellent examples power-sliding their way into the PSW offices on an almost daily basis, picking the wheat from the chaff, the Ferrari F40s from the Daihatsu Charades, has become even more important.

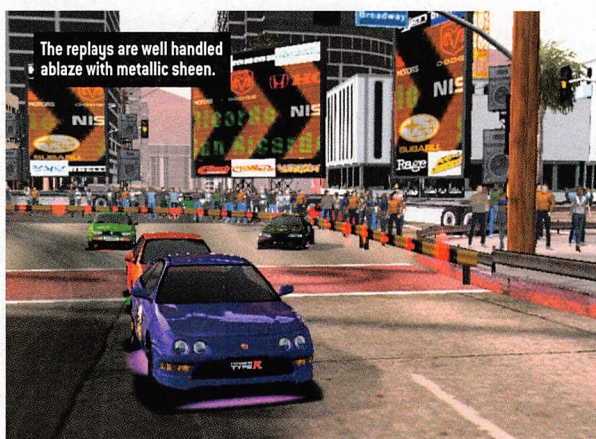
Therefore, it is with a palpable sense of responsibility that we don our backless leather driving gloves once again and prepare to intimately probe the private parts of yet another racing game.

Juiced is the latest title to take a swing at the car modification market, with all manner of customisation options available. It also offers a massive number of different race types and a 'respect' system that sees considerate racing and calculated risks building up a crew of like-minded, Ford Escort-bothering speed junkies, with the aim of becoming king of the streets.

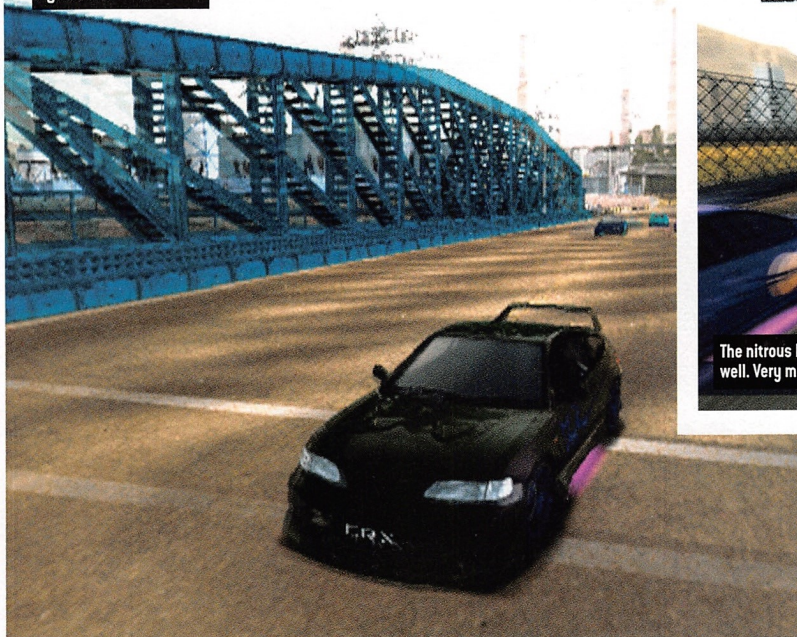
Before we start getting stuck into this unique progression system, we need to answer the most important question of all – does it handle any

good then or what? For such a colourful and 'urban' game, the handling is not as arcade-like as you might expect, not by a long shot. Under the hood, there is some pretty hardcore simulation going on and this can be felt all too clearly in the handling of the cars. Trying to power slide your way round every corner will see you spinning out and losing. You have to find the racing line and feed your car through with subtlety and guile. This is definitely not a game for people who ask if they need to use the brake.

Drive badly and not only will you lose races, you'll lose respect too. Losing respect is a bad thing. In order to gain access to the other sections of the city, you first have to gain the respect of the crew who own that area. Different



It's that CRX winning again. What a car.



TIME: 00:04:05
RECORD: 05:00:00



The nitrous blur effect works well. Very much like Burnout 3.



The race locations are hugely varied.



Our man Vito putting in another great win.



Pile-ups can be a costly and irritating business.

crews respect different things, from your circuit racing skills to your pink slip racing. To begin with, most crews will grant you 'attend only' privileges, meaning that you can watch – and more importantly bet – on the races, but not take part. If you want to find new opponents and new tracks to race, you'll have to show great skill in all of the various areas in order to gain the respect of all the crews

Races are grouped into meetings, usually with a selection of different race types on offer. You don't have to take part in any of the races, should you not want to and often, a well judged bet is a better idea than a good race. Races can't win you anywhere near the money that a good bet can. These meetings are organised onto a

calendar, giving you access to a large number of races at any point in the year, thereby letting you pick and choose where to spend your time and efforts. This idea sounds good on paper but sadly doesn't translate so well into the game. When you're trying to progress, it's often difficult to work out what you're supposed to be doing. You can just waddle through every race in order but this can soon become repetitive. A little more information about how to unlock or locate specific races would have been welcome.

'NUFF RESPECT

When you've worked so hard to build up respect, frustration can set in when your opponents happily smash into you, often resulting in a race-

"HANDLING IS NOT AS ARCADE-LIKE AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT. UNDER THE HOOD, THERE'S SOME HARDCORE SIMULATION GOING ON."

losing spin. When you're driving carefully and they're taking you out of the race with an ignorant shunt, you'll probably want to borrow our backless leather driving gloves and slowly strangle your PlayStation2 to death. No fingerprints, nothing to link you to the crime – just like a real professional. Magic.

After a few of these unfortunate accidents have occurred in a row they result in a run at the title being turned into a hopeless situation, and you will be forced into restarting the Career mode more often than you might want. While this is initially no great hardship – you can buy a different car, tune it differently, paint it a

SIXTH GEAR

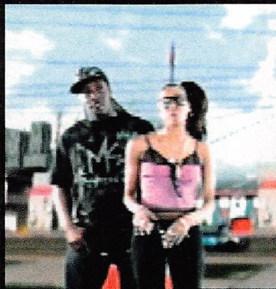
The intro to *Juiced* is one of the most amazing things we've ever seen, in the whole world, ever.



This is Shystie, a UK Garage princess who's better than her name suggests.



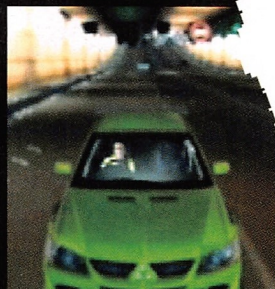
The voice behind the intro to *Juiced*, she's superimposed into the game.



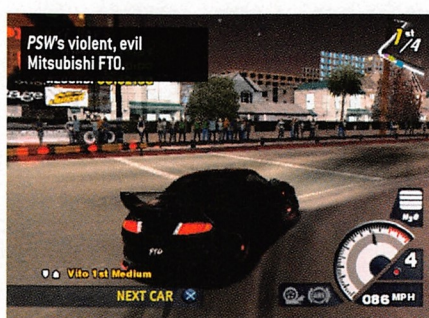
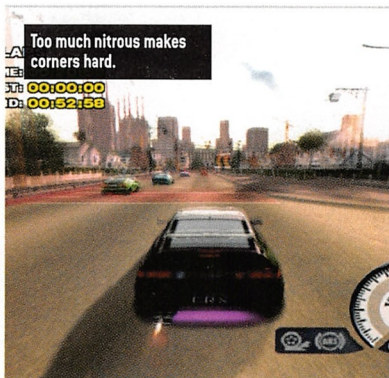
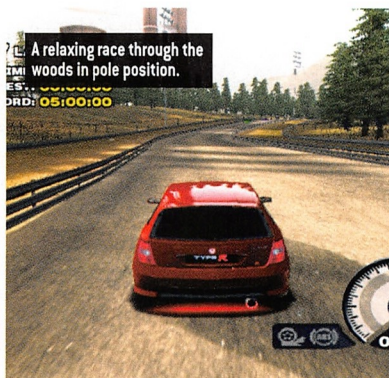
Sing along now "Tits up, clutch down, pedal to the floor..."



"Sixth gear, switch gear, something something more..."



We've watched it at least a million times already. Well done Shystie.



Land on any car down there, and you'll get taken round the city for free.

different colour and enter different races – with a Career mode this vast in scale, the slow and stuttering progress can make you want to do all kinds of special crimes to the men responsible. Although we can't help but respect the open-ended and considered design, the balance isn't perfect and the substantial freedom on offer sometimes translates into sheer frustration.

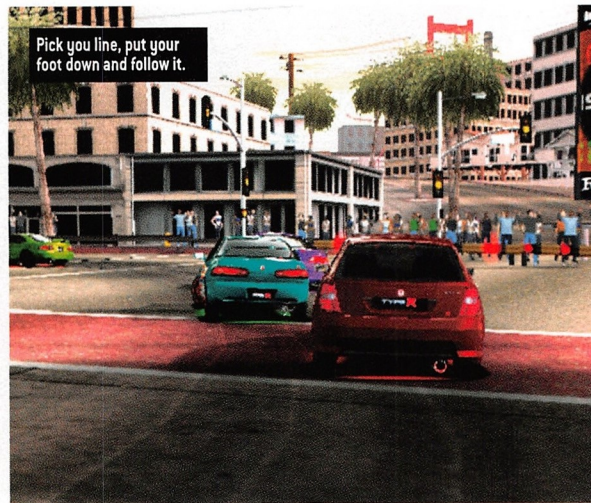
Still, if the Single-player mode gets too much for you, there's always the joys of the hugely

addictive Online mode to consider, which beats *Need For Speed Underground* hands down. This will see you taking on other car modding nuts on in a variety of race types. The use of your own car online gives you a chance to express yourself properly, rather than relying on a 'hilarious' yet ultimately stupid username. We think you'll agree that a fluorescent green 600BHP Golf shows far more individuality than the tag: 'LaYdEezMaN_89'.

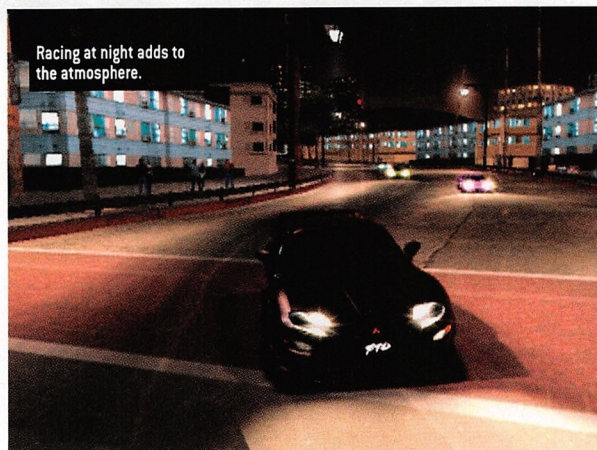




You can make side bets with the racers.



Pick your line, put your foot down and follow it.



Racing at night adds to the atmosphere.



There's some beautiful scenery to take in.

"THE USE OF YOUR OWN CAR ONLINE ALLOWS YOU TO EXPRESS YOURSELF PROPERLY, RATHER THAN RELY ON A 'HILARIOUS' USERNAME."

MODS, ROCKERS AND TAILFINS

One thing none of the so-called car modification games we have seen to date pulls off with any great conviction is the actual car modification. They're all racing games at heart and as such, you're never doing anything for any reason than to open more races, or find a faster car. For real car modification nuts, the joy is in the car itself. They aren't raced with any great regularity – hardly surprising considering the time, effort and money put into building them. More and

more car modification games are stacking up on the horizon but none of them seem able to buck this trend. Until a game can give the same sense of pride in ownership that real modified cars do, we can't see these games as anything other than gimmicky racers, no matter how much we enjoy sticking a seven-foot rear wing on a pink Skyline GT-R.

Still, enough with the heavy talk, this is the best game in the car modding market. Its Story mode is bizarre and sometimes frustrating but don't underestimate the depth or breadth of driving fun on offer here. *Juiced* is an oddly adult game. You need tolerance and forward planning to make any great progress; its sober handling model and sometimes incredibly harsh Career mode will test your skill and your patience to the limit. With a philosophical attitude to defeat and a slow but steady attitude to racing, you'll eventually win through and delight in the huge world of racing on offer. We're already looking forward to the sequel.

/ MARK SORRELL

PAINT IT BLACK

The best bit of *Juiced* is still the paint options. The range of colours is staggering – take a look...

CASE 1

This is orange paint with a metallic raspberry tint and pink pearlescent, making a colour that makes us want a peach yoghurt more than ever before.

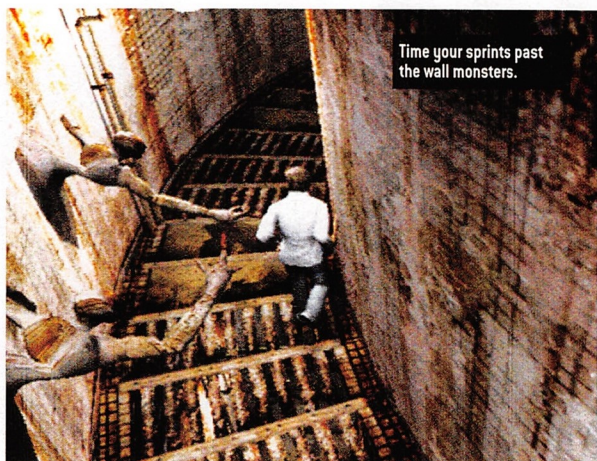
CASE 2

This is a white base coat with metallic blue flecks and a mint green pearlescent. The car's so clean, looking at it makes your breath fresher and your teeth whiter.

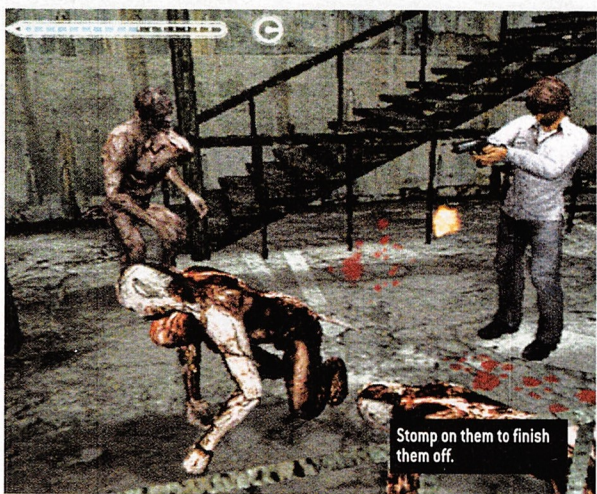
CASE 3

It starts off moody black, with orange metallic and a dirty green pearlescent. It's monstrous and reminds us of that bit in *Jackass* where the guy swims in sewage.

PSW VERDICT	
UPPERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazing paint options Choice of racing styles Good soundtrack Meaty handling 	DOWNERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be confusing Can be harsh Limited body kits Ignorant opponents
GRAPHICS > Excellent. Beautiful paint effects	9
SOUNDS > Meaty engines and good tunes	7
GAMEPLAY > Frustrating but rewarding	8
OVERALL SCORE An excellent addition to the car modding genre let down by an overly complex and frustrating Story mode. It's a truly great game but do be prepared to put in some work to get at the real game.	8



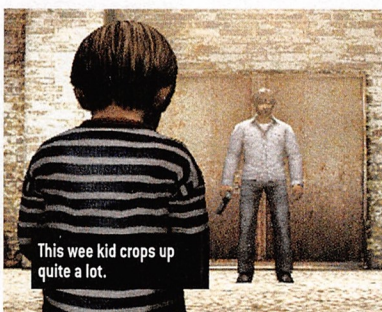
Time your sprints past the wall monsters.



Stomp on them to finish them off.



The hospital is full of 'freaky rooms.'



This wee kid crops up quite a lot.



SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

The terror switches to a new town, but otherwise it's business as usual for the seminal survival horror series. Which means plenty of two-headed babies and monkey men.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> PUBLISHER	KONAMI
> DEVELOPER	KONAMI
> ONLINE	NO

WE'VE LIVED IN SOME RAT-INFESTED SHIT-PITS passing themselves off as 'student digs' in our time, but nothing compares to the apartment poor old Henry Townshend finds himself trapped in. How did someone manage to chain his door shut from the inside? Why is there a gaping hole in his bathroom wall and the sound of children's laughter coming from within? Who keeps shoving cryptic notes under his door? Most importantly though, why hasn't he bonked his fit next-door neighbour yet?

It's a fantastic premise, and a compelling

predicament. In true *Silent Hill* style even the easy the questions don't have straightforward answers. Even if you make it through to one of the four endings you'll still probably come away scratching your head.

And this is precisely why *Silent Hill* remains the most effective survival horror series. Rather than settle for short, sharp shocks (though there are a few classic jump-out-of-your-chair moments thrown in for good measure too), the elaborate story slowly draws you in before assaulting your senses with disturbing images and foreboding ambient noises. There's an ever-present feeling of claustrophobia and oppression throughout, making simple tasks such as walking down a long corridor a torturous experience. Often nothing happens, which is

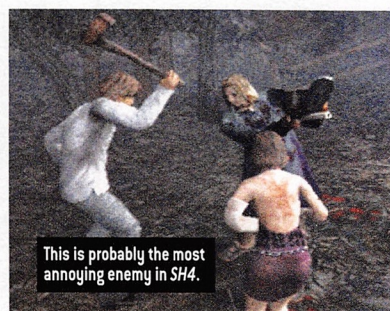
probably worse since you don't get any form of release. It's the kind of intense psychological horror that only the Japanese seem to be able to do properly.

WE BLAME THE PARENTS

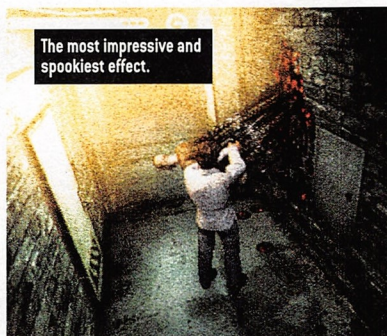
And it's easy to spot recurring themes and issues. Abuse (especially child abuse) and guilt are the obvious concerns, and during the first half of the game *The Room* does a fine job of casting suspicion on each and every character – including Henry. These aren't ordinary characters thrust into a nightmarish, supernatural world. They're clearly messed up or damaged from the outset. Henry, ironically a character we get to know the least about, is something of a voyeur anyway and his apartment as both a physical



Keep running and don't bother wasting ammo.



This is probably the most annoying enemy in SH4.



and mental prison really works as a metaphor, however pretentious that might sound.

The hole in Henry's bathroom lets you travel between his apartment and the 'outside' world, with a number of portals dotted around these otherworldly levels so you can nip back to save your game. Whichever portal you use to travel back to the apartment is the one you emerge from on your return, so there's little backtracking and no trawling through a level from the beginning again. Apartment intervals also give the game an episodic feel, which we much prefer to getting lost in one huge level.

The apartment is where much of the story is

told. Each time you return the building has subtly changed and there are a number of actions you are advised to perform in order to get the most out of the game. Listening to the radio, looking out of the window, perusing your neighbour through a hole in the wall and peering through the door's peephole help flesh out the roles of secondary characters and provide further clues as to what the hell is going on. A handy eye icon appears whenever Henry moves past something that warrants a closer look.

SAFE KEEPING

You can also regain health just by remaining in the apartment (at least in the first half of the game) as well as storing surplus items in a chest to retrieve for a later level. Deeper into the game there are far too many important items for Henry

"THE ELABORATE STORY SLOWLY DRAWS YOU IN BEFORE ASSAULTING YOUR SENSES WITH DISTURBING IMAGES AND SOUNDS."

to hold, forcing irritating trips back and forth through the nearest portal and the odd wrong choice of which items to carry. You can't drop items and if the inventory is full Henry isn't even able to identify what it is he's trying to pick up; he just whinges that he can't carry any more. Ammo clips are inexplicably classed as separate items and take up extra slots too. Our other main grumble is the new, forced first-person view when inside the apartment, which adds nothing that the traditional third-person view couldn't handle and actually proves a little clumsy when moving around Henry's cluttered furniture.

There are six otherworldly areas that Henry visits in his (or perhaps someone else's) dreams: a subway, a forest, a prison, a store, the entire apartment block, and a hospital. While we'd have liked to have seen some new locales, it just wouldn't be a *Silent Hill* game without a rotting hospital, complete with zombified nurses who spit out loud belches whenever you smack them with a blunt instrument. The monsters in general aren't quite as icky or fleshy this time, but seeing creatures with two heads galloping towards you and mutated, gibbering man-monkeys wielding golf clubs will disturb your brain, even if they're not particularly scary in the traditional sense.

SPOOK CENTRAL

Ghosts are the other major new enemy. They can drift through solid objects and, in a striking graphical effect, squeeze out of the other side by pushing through with their hands. A copycat of Sadako from *Ring* even slithers along the subway station, her long hair leaving a black, gooey trace

THE STORY SO FAR

Warning: there may be spoilers ahead.



SILENT HILL

Harry Mason takes his daughter Cheryl on vacation to *Silent Hill*. The pair are involved in a car accident and Cheryl disappears. Turns out Cheryl is the manifestation of a child raised by a cult that intended to use her to resurrect an evil god.



SILENT HILL 2

James Sunderland visits *Silent Hill* after he receives a letter from his wife, who died after a long illness, saying she'll meet him there. In the end we learn that James killed his wife to end her suffering and that the monsters he fights are his own.



SILENT HILL 3

Heather Mason (Harry's 'other' daughter) carries the foetus of the *Silent Hill* cult's god, which has remained dormant for the past 17 years. Harry is killed by the cult and it's revealed that Heather is actually the latest persona of Cheryl.



SILENT HILL 4

Walter Sullivan was abandoned as a child and sent to an orphanage run by the cult. He tried to resurrect his dead mother through a sacrificial ceremony and believed that room 302 was his mother. Err.. Henry Townsend lives there now.

LIVING IN A BOX

When you're stuck in one room, you've got to amuse yourself somehow.



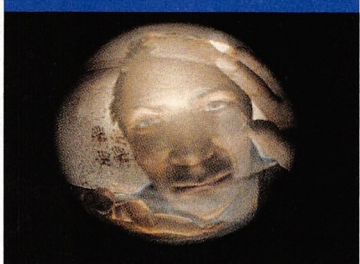
1. BE A PEEPING TOM

Spy on your sexy neighbour Eileen who later joins you in the otherworld.



2. WATCH THE WORLD GO BY

The people of South Ashfield go about their business seemingly oblivious to your plight.



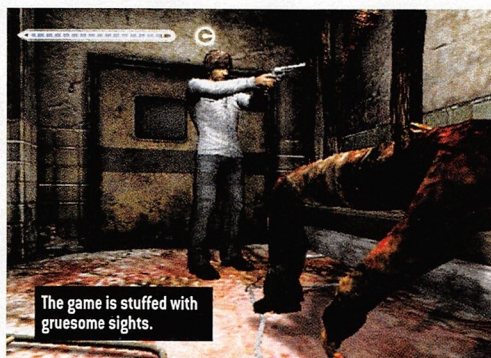
3. BE A NOSY NEIGHBOUR

You can see and hear them, but they can't hear you. Spooky.

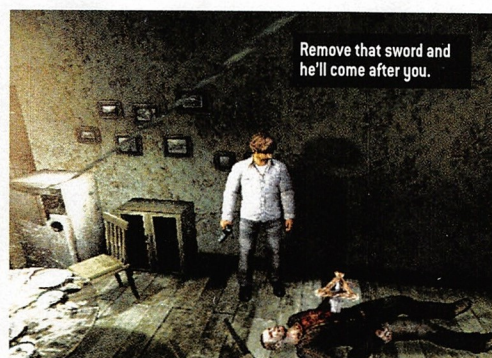


4. READ YOUR POST

Who's leaving notes? Actually, you leave them for yourself sometimes.



The game is stuffed with gruesome sights.



Remove that sword and he'll come after you.



What's that she's holding in her hand?

on the ground. No amount of stomps kills them either and the only way to prevent them from following you is to impale them with a special sword. Unfortunately, these are in very short supply. Unlike Heather, James and Harry before him, Henry doesn't have the convenience of radio static to warn him of imminent danger, though in the case of ghosts the screen turns a shade of red and static is heard.

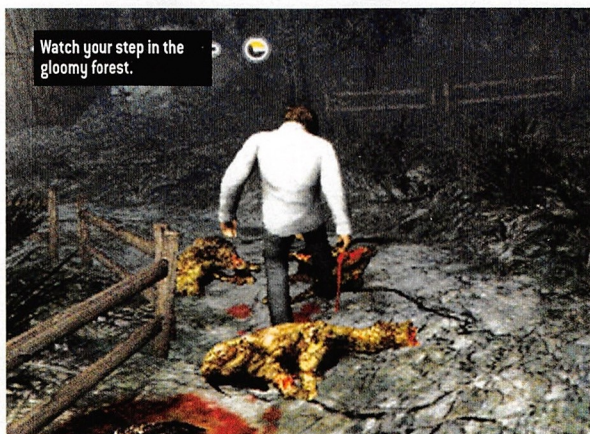
Combat is still only so-so. The target lock does anything but remain on one enemy, while you only ever need a pistol and a melee weapon to take care of the doopy monsters, despite a

wide selection of weapons being made available. Some weapons are even described as being difficult to use, so what's the point? On the plus side, the ability to charge attacks and perform a nifty evasive retreat move are welcome. An interesting side-point here is that there's only one boss battle in the entire game.

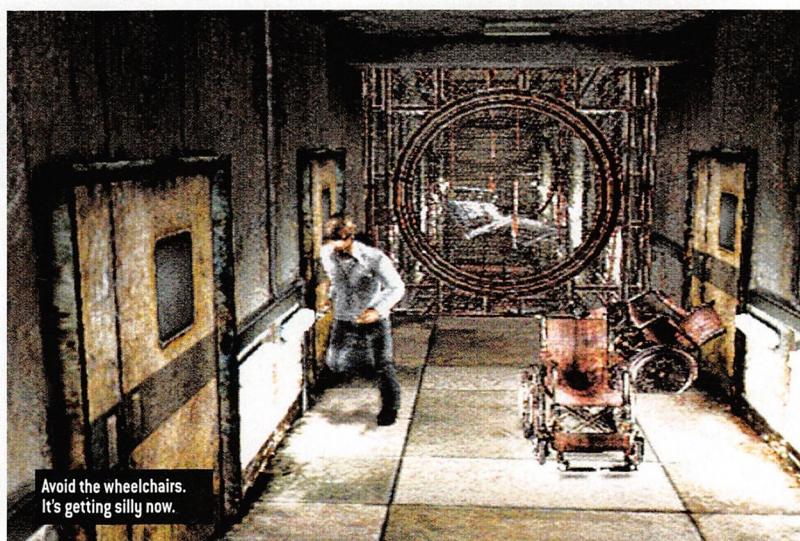
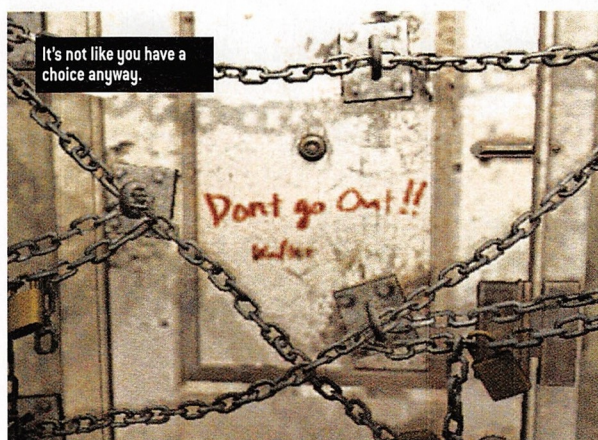
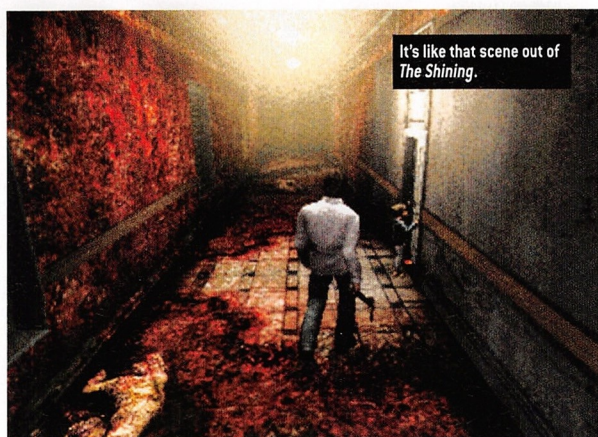
Genuine puzzles are surprisingly thin on the ground too, which could be a good or a bad thing, depending on your penchant for the obtuse riddles and hidden meanings of the previous games. Here they're lifted directly from the Big Book of Adventure Games, with some solved by item placement and others by following explicit instructions on a note, memo or diary page. Perhaps it would have been a better idea to retain the puzzle difficulty option and let you make up your own mind.

SOUNDING OFF

There's no disputing the quality of the graphics. The character and monster models are the most detailed yet and retain the expressiveness that buoyed *Silent Hill 3*. Some of the backdrops are less glorious, though it's amazing how rusting piles of junk can hold so much fascination; the hospital level with its surreal machinery and fetish for umbilical cords is outstanding. We certainly don't miss the foggy locales, though not having a flashlight robs the game of some impressive lighting opportunities. There are all



Watch your step in the gloomy forest.



sorts of cool effects for the different worlds too, such as a grainy filter for whenever you emerge from a portal or are about to die.

And of course the audio is terrific, accounting for nearly all of the game's most terrifying moments. Sudden shrieks, guttural noises and whispers from some unseen place are underpinned by a constant rumbling, almost industrial sound that heightens the oppressive atmosphere. The voice acting is decent all-round and nicely underplayed, while the music is plain eerie at times. Whack the volume up on your TV and be very afraid.

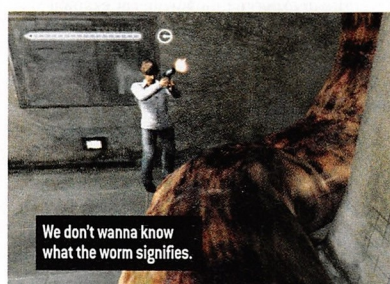
A GAME OF TWO HALVES

After such a fantastic first half, the game then abandons everything it worked so hard for. And we really do mean everything. A sloppy retread finds you revisiting five out of the six environments; the boring plot involving *Silent Hill*'s religious cult takes over; you don't spend any more time investigating in your apartment because spirits start invading it; the backtracking that the game largely avoided is suddenly the only way to complete dull 'fetch' puzzles; most enemies are now invincible and chase you through rooms, so you end up playing 'dodge the monster' rather than standing firm and taking them on one by one.

Worst of all, you're saddled with an injured companion for the rest of the game who can't

"THE SECOND HALF OF THE GAME IS A BATTLE AGAINST OBVIOUS DESIGN FLAWS, RATHER THAN SUPERNATURAL FORCES."

climb ladders or run very fast and whose weapons take up slots in your inventory. In fact, she doesn't do many things right. While you're sprinting towards an exit, she'll be needlessly chasing after an invincible ghost at the other end of an area to swat it with her purse, which means you have to dodge a pack of pursuing monsters hovering near the exit door until she's caught up so you can leave together. While you're trying to offer protection by moving Henry between her and an enemy, she'll get in your way in an almost deliberate act of stupidity. The second half of the game is a

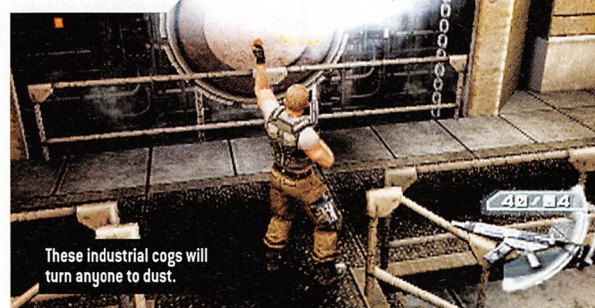
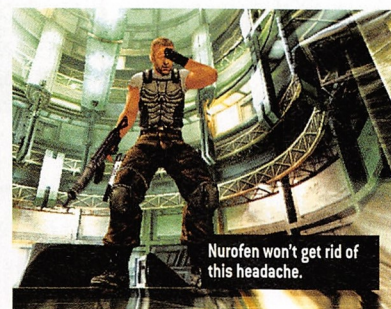


constant battle against obvious design flaws, rather than supernatural forces. Which is a crying shame because the first half sets you up to expect a thrilling conclusion.

Ultimately, *Silent Hill 4* just falls short of its predecessors. The story starts out superbly, but you'll have guessed the outcome long before it peters out to its expected conclusion. The same goes for the areas, which are spooky the first time but very tedious when you're forced to revisit them. This kind of artificial longevity smacks of either a rush-release or just a lack of inspiration four games down the line. Still, given the choice between this and *Resident Evil Outbreak* we know which one we'd rather play.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT		
> UPBERS	> DOWNERS	
> As disturbing as ever	> Second half is terrible	
> Spooky sounds	> Not scary as such	
> Compelling story	> Rubbish companion	
> Grotesque monsters	> Cack inventory system	
GRAPHICS	> Highly detailed characters and monsters	8
SOUNDS	> Chilling noises throughout	9
GAMEPLAY	> Tries something new, but it's a step back	7
OVERALL SCORE		
Half a brilliant game and half a nightmare worse than <i>Silent Hill</i> itself. Quite what Konami was thinking by introducing a tag-along character for the entire second half beggars belief.		
		7



PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

If you like the idea of throwing stuff around, starting fires and making heads explode using only the power of your mind then you've come to the right place.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	MIDWAY
> DEVELOPER	MIDWAY
> ONLINE	NO

NEVER HAS IT BEEN MORE APPARENT THAT power corrupts than while playing *Psi-Ops*. Give a person psychic abilities and the first thing he does is murder someone with them. The second thing he does is murder someone in the most sadistic way imaginable with them, with a great big grin etched across his face. This is a game that loves rewarding complete and utter bastards. You actually start powerless though, thanks to

a credible memory-wipe plot device and only regain your five abilities one by one. Each time an ability is 'rediscovered' a playable flashback ensues, where your character receives a handy refresher course in that ability. There's a neat twist to all this later on in the game, when the instructor resurfaces as a boss you must defeat.

Telekinesis is the first and most commonly used power you're given. It's also one you'll never tire of experimenting with. For example, with telekinesis at your disposal there's no need to shoot that handily-placed explosive barrel next to that enemy soldier. No, that would be way too predictable. Instead, why not try picking the barrel up and flinging it across a room at someone else? Then you can spit-roast the first enemy over the resulting flames.

The same power is also used to solve the game's infrequent platform-style puzzles. Need to reach a ledge that's just out of reach? Then summon a crate and use it as a stepping stone.

Can't reach an even higher one? Stand on top of a box, engage your power and you'll both float upwards. In fact, when combined with telekinesis the humble crate is arguably the most important item in *Psi-Ops* – as both a tool and a weapon.

BRAIN JUICE

The other powers get their fair share of the limelight too. Remote Viewing is a kind of out-of-body experience that lets you ghost through solid objects to observe enemy patrol patterns and see how you could make use of the surroundings. Mind Control puts you in an enemy's body in order to open locked doors and pull levers, after which you're free to switch back, use the element of surprise to nobble a few guards, or commit suicide. Mind Drain sucks Psi energy from a living or dead enemy, resulting in their head exploding *Scanners*-style. And Pyrokinesis, the final and most powerful ability, launches a burst of fire that ignites other objects





Kill him and cremate him all in one go.



Hide behind the crate then lift him up.



This first boss has an army of human bombs.

"COMBINED WITH TELEKINESIS, THE HUMBLE CRATE IS ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM – AS BOTH A TOOL AND A WEAPON."

in its path like a stack of dominoes.

The result is that no one death ever looks the same, especially with the impressive physics engine causing bodies and objects to tumble around unpredictably. There's no funnier sight than chucking an enemy off the top of a building, and watching in squemish delight as his face hits a stack of boxes 20ft below while the rest of his body arches and slumps to the ground in a crumpled, broken heap.

Boss fights are just as spectacular, with the standout being against your former trainer Barret who's an expert in Telekinesis. He can toss everything from trucks to tankers and even redirects objects in mid-flight into your path. Try to be clever by fencing him in with items and he emits a shockwave that destroys everything within a certain radius. Bosses are governed by patterned attacks, but there's always enough leeway so that it feels like they're responding to your every move.

SPAWNY GITS

With these abilities plus ordinary weapons at your disposal, you'd be forgiven for thinking that *Psi-Ops* is easy. It isn't. What enemies lack in Psi powers they make up for in numbers, firepower and decent marksmanship. Right from the first level they all carry machine guns, assault rifles, sniper rifles or grenades. If an alarm is set off they often spawn into the level from behind you, which strikes us as a bit of a lazy way for the game to counteract your immense powers. This isn't a stealth game, so it's unfair that you should be punished for wanting to steam in with your guns blazing and powers working overtime.

Thankfully these design flaws are rare. *Psi-Ops* is one of the freshest third-person shooters of the year. For every exploding barrel or time spent backtracking through a level to use a keycard, there's an ingenious set-piece or potential death trap that your powers can take advantage of. The story won't take you long to

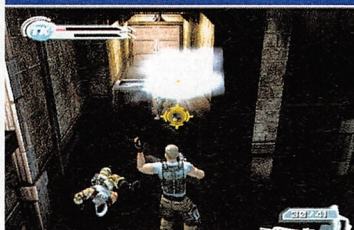
TORTURE CHAMBER

A choice selection of PSW's favourite execution methods.



1. HUMAN BARBECUE

Dangle an enemy over flames, lowering and raising him just to be sadistic.



2. LOOK, NO HANDS

Pistol-whip an enemy without touching the gun using the power of telekinesis.



3. FRIENDLY FIRE

Mind Control an enemy and deliberately stand him in the line of fire.

play through, but it's a game you'll come back to again and again anyway because you've thought of a new torture method that you want to try out. We're off now to box someone in with crates and set the stack alight. We're like that.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS

> Tons of ways to kill
> Gruesome deaths
> More than a novelty game
> Morally ambiguous hero

> DOWNERS

> Stock shooter conventions
> Stupid enemy spawning
> Stealth doesn't work properly
> No multiplayer

GRAPHICS > Crisp, with lovely fire effects

8

SOUNDS > Disgusting thuds and squelches

7

GAMEPLAY > Anything is possible with the five powers

8

OVERALL SCORE

Hugely entertaining thanks to the five powers that let you be creative with each kill. You'll never tire of splatting people into walls or dropping boxes on them from a great height.

8



CRIMSON SEA 2

Aliens meets *Akira* in this futuristic Japanese action slasher from the people behind *Dynasty Warriors*. Prepare to step into the shoes of a one-man-army in space.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	KOEI
> DEVELOPER	KOEI
> ONLINE	NO

AS A PS2-EXCLUSIVE SEQUEL TO AN XBOX-

exclusive original, *Crimson Sea 2* improves on the original in many ways, primarily in the visuals department. It's a one-man-army action adventure in the same vein as *Dynasty Warriors*, with plenty of hacking, slashing and shooting.

You play the part of Sho; a Vipa super-soldier who works for the Intelligence Agency of the Galaxy, protecting the inhabitants of Theophilus from harm. In the first game, set two years before the events of the sequel, Sho saved the day against the Mutons. Predictably enough, you've now got to help him do it all again against a different enemy – a hostile reptilian alien race known as the Menace.

Along the way, you'll be able to learn more about your powers, your past and the galaxy around you through a series of lush animations. A grand twisty-turny story will unfold and you'll even unlock a second playable character called

Feenay, who turns out to have the same Vipa background and powers as you. But for the most part you will be killing giant space lizards and laying waste to their insectoid cousins.

In between missions a mothership acts as Sho's base. Missions can be undertaken in any order from the mission select screen on the bridge of the ship, and Sho can also return to completed missions to increase his experience, level up and generally toughen up for harder battles later on. In total there are 60 missions to complete, ranging from simple 'kill everything' bloodbaths to more testing 'VIP protection' and 'item retrieval' types.

Despite all the levelling-up and convoluted plot distractions, *Crimson Sea 2* basically boils down to one thing: slaughtering Menace. To this end Sho is armed with a number of impressively-powered guns, plus a Lightsaber-like Blade for close-combat melee work. Combat is fast, frenetic and, for the most part, highly satisfying. The third-person camera is easy to get used to, which is a good job because more often than not you'll find yourself battling against dozens of Menace at once, coming at you from all areas of the screen. Against the mostly stupid foot-soldiers it's a bit like going to a turkey shoot with a laser gun – just keep moving, keep shooting and keep slashing and eventually you'll clean up. It's repetitive after a while but highly satisfying too. Especially when you are able to employ your special Vipa powers to destroy whole swathes of

enemies in one go.

Boss battles are a lot harder though and if you should fail there's the frustration-turning-to-anger chore of having to replay entire missions to reach the boss again because there are no in-game save options. Being the harsh markers we are we've deducted a whole point for this alone.

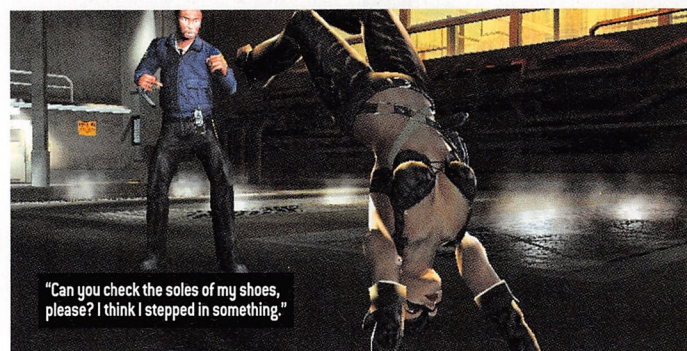
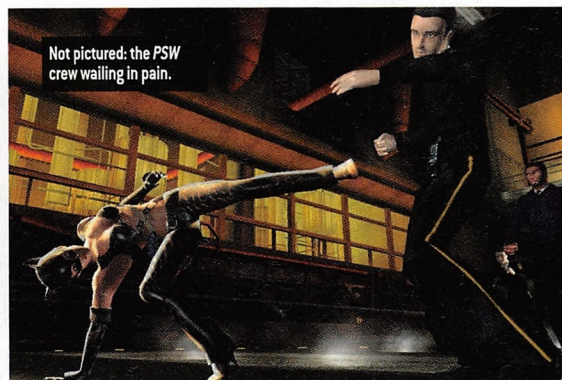
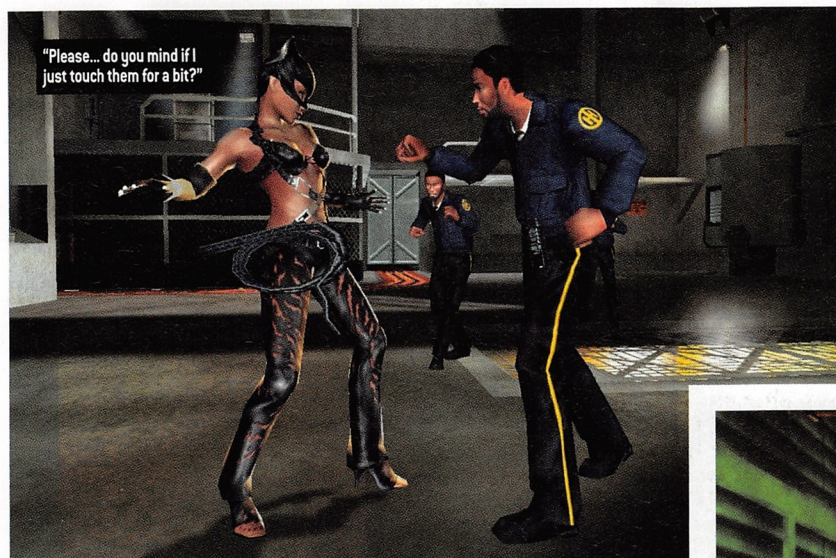
Graphically, *Crimson Seas 2* is rock solid. Character and environment detail is impressive, while cut-scenes and animations are both vivid and grand in scale. While incidental sounds are fine, voice acting is poor – a shame because there's a huge story waiting to be told. But, to be honest, we were far more enthused by the relentless and brutal combat action than any of the nice, fluffy padding behind it anyway.

/ AUDLEY JARVIS



PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Relentless combat	> No in-game saves
> Satisfying weaponry	> Repetitive
> Looks good	> Poor voice acting
> Massive story	> Massive story
GRAPHICS	> Impressive detail in-game, lush cut-scenes
SOUNDS	> Voice acting sounds like bad dubbing
GAMEPLAY	> Great combat let down by no in-game saves
OVERALL SCORE	
Frantic combat, brutal weaponry and some fantastic story-telling animations. Those that take a chance will find a solid shooter full of some of the biggest bosses you'll ever see on PS2.	
7	



CATWOMAN

THE CAT'S OUT OF THE BAG... BUT IT'S DEAD, STINKING AND CRAWLING WITH MAGGOTS. WON'T SOMEBODY PLEASE PUT IT BACK IN? FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THAT'S GOOD... PLEASE!

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	EA
> DEVELOPER	ARGONAUT
> ONLINE	NOW

LET'S BE VERY CLEAR ABOUT THIS STRAIGHT AWAY:

Catwoman is an utterly terrible game. It is awful. It is atrocious. It is an appalling mess that no self-respecting person could tolerate for more than an hour tops. But it could've been better. In fact, it probably could've been pretty good. While shambling through this unrelenting quagmire of crappiness, there were moments when things looked like they could've been different – fleeting glimpses of a better game suffocating under the crud of a convoluted control scheme and clumsy camera mechanics. How unfortunate that these hints of excellence never materialised into anything more concrete.

The main problem with this game is that it forces players to mimic Catwoman's complex acrobatics with similarly intricate control-pad gymnastics. Here's the thing: just because a move *looks* complex on screen, it doesn't mean that it actually has to *be* complex for players to pull off. A big part of *Prince of Persia*'s appeal, for example, was that it let players string together long sequences of improbable gymnastic feats

with only a few easy-to-remember button presses. *Catwoman* is the exact opposite. Even relatively simple actions like swinging from a pole are frustratingly unintuitive and complicated. The guys and gals at Argonaut probably thought themselves quite clever when they decided that every move in the game should be performed by holding down one of the shoulder buttons while manipulating the thumbsticks, but they were wrong. It's not clever – it's frustrating and completely unnecessary. Why should using the whip involve holding down R2 and twiddling the right thumbstick when it could just as easily and effectively be a matter of pressing one of the face buttons?

Exacerbating the pain of shonky controls is the camera: it's shit. Everyone always harps on about cameras in third-person action games and we've come to expect even the best examples of the genre are going to be at least a little annoying in this regard, but *Catwoman*'s camera goes beyond mere annoyance – it actually renders the whole game pretty much unplayable.

Honestly, it's like Argonaut went out of its way to position the (immovable) camera in the most useless and obtrusive vantage points available. There are many, many instances in which you'll become hopelessly stuck in a section simply because you won't be able to see where you're supposed to go next. Oh, I was supposed to swing off that pole there? The one I *couldn't* see because your stupid camera was pointing at a wall on the *opposite side of the goddamn level*? Thanks, *Catwoman*! You're the best game ever... at making me hate my PS2.

I can't think of any good reason to buy this game. It's actually *worse* than the movie... and by god if that doesn't turn you off, then I don't know what will.

/ DANIEL STAINES



PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS		> DOWNERS	
> The Halle Berry model looks ok.		> Crap controls	
> Umm...		> Crap camera	
> The... uh...		> Crap combat	
> No, that's it.		> Crap Catwoman	
GRAPHICS > The main character model is nice...			5
SOUNDS > Terrible sound effects and voice acting			4
GAMEPLAY > Frustrating, nonsensical and tedious			3
OVERALL SCORE			
With it's horrid controls, incredibly frustrating camera and slipshod design, <i>Catwoman</i> is a terrible game all round. We expect licensed games to be crap, but this is just astoundingly bad. Avoid it.		3	



KILL BILL: VOL. 2

The Bride returns in the second half of QT's martial-arts opus...

Released Out Now Year 2004 Starring Uma Thurman Director Quentin Tarantino

Like one of The Bride's lethal sword strikes, *Kill Bill: Vol. 2* split audiences right down the middle. Some claimed it gave Tarantino's characters breathing room and emotional heft. Others, with a disdainful flick of their beard, derided the naff natter, pat ending and paucity of gory cut 'em ups. Funny thing is, they're both right. Sure, the second instalment boasts Uma Thurman's snappy scenes with Pai Mei (Gordon Liu), her ouch-tastic lady-scrap with Daryl Hannah and grizzly support from Michael Madsen and David Carradine. On the downside, the thin revenge plot is stretched to breaking point and pivots on a maternal twist that, while surprising, also throws the whole film off balance.

EXTRAS Same applies here. The only deleted scene is an amusing-but-creaky scrap between Carradine and Michael Jai White. The Making Of is a standard 26-minute hot-air piece, with middling footage of Robert Rodriguez's band playing the score live for people who like that sort of thing. As with the film, so with the DVD: don't get your swords up.

VERDICT The end result is rather like Hannah's *Elle Driver*: not dead, but missing a few vital parts.

★★★★★

Kevin Harley

KILL BILL'S WARRIOR WOMAN SPILLS HER GUTS...

How did you and Quentin come up with the concept of *The Bride*?

It was a conversation we had 10 years ago. He kept going on about revenge movies and how there were more interesting roles for women in 'outsider' cinema.

Tarantino has called you his muse. Does it please you to hear that?

It's hard to say. I mean, what can I say? A muse is not a real thing – it's like being called a unicorn.

So how does your relationship work?

There's a mutual exchange of faith and confidence. Certainly in the two *Kill Bill* films, because both of us were reaching into new territory.

Yet you say Tarantino is your favourite director...

Put it this way: I've made three films with him. I've never made three films with anyone else.

Do you think it works better as two films rather than one?

Yes, I do. The first one is more of a spectacle. It's unreal, surrealistic, kamikaze, mad.



SCOOBY-DOO 2: MONSTERS UNLEASHED

Released August 23 Year 2004

Director Raja Gosnell Starring Matthew Lillard

The first outing for the Mystery Inc. gang was a scrappy do that still managed to rake it in. The sequel ditches the postmodern riffing and instead consumes its source material, loading up a thin storyline with a banquet of the 'toon's classic monsters.

The cast are on mugging autopilot, though once again the day is saved by Matthew Lillard's spot-on Shaggy and his above-the-call-of-duty interaction with his freakish canine co-star.

EXTRAS No commentary this time round, though director Raja Gosnell does chatter his way through some rough deleted scenes that were mostly trimmed to keep the story moving. The Triple Threat featurette is full of happy, studio-penned guff about the "heart and love" on set, while True Ghou! Hollywood Story tries to make a mockumentary work alongside interviews with the thespians behind the ghosts.

VERDICT Slapabout comedy that will amuse the little ones, while everyone else tries to stop their brain cells from dripping out of their ears.

★★★★★ James White

THE CAT IN THE HAT

Released Out now Year 2003

Director Bo Welch Starring Mike Myers

Somewhere in the middle of this muddled movie about two kids, a talking cat and "the mother of all messes", Mike Myers hits his stride. For around five or so minutes his titular feline is as charismatic as he's ever been, reeling off a superb infomercial spoof before stomping through a succession of line-





GOTHIKA

Halle's as mad as a bag of monkeys in this silly chiller...

Released 2004 Director Mathieu Kassovitz Starring Halle Berry Year 2003

"I'm not deluded, I'm possessed!" That Halle Berry can utter such a patently ludicrous line says a lot about the Oscar-winning actress. It says she can invest the most risible dialogue with urgency and drama. To be fair, *Gothika* plays a lot better on the small screen than it did in the cinema. For one thing, despite its polished veneer and A-list players, Mathieu Kassovitz's picture already feels like a shonky, straight-to-video chiller. Then there's the clichéd (Berry trapped in an asylum) plot, a premise that could have been lifted wholesale from a *Twilight Zone* episode. Then look on slack-jawed as Kassovitz engineers a naked shower scene, just so he can get Berry's bum on camera. **EXTRAS** Kassovitz and DoP Matthew Libatique get through their chummy, piss-taking commentary without once mentioning that Robert Downey Jr broke Berry's arm on set. **VERDICT** This is one of those so-bad-it's-good movies that repays repeat viewings.

★★★★★ Neil Smith

'em up, knock 'em down visual gags. And then, just like that, *The Cat In The Hat's* lunatic energy begins to wear a bald patch on our patience. The opening act's headrush soon becomes the closing act's headache.

EXTRAS Moviegoers being renowned for their short attention spans, the behind-the-scenes material on offer here has been chopped into 11 grossly unrevealing two-minute shorts. More substantial are the dozen deleted scenes, the out-takes and the backslapping commentary by Alec Baldwin and director Bo Welch. A bit of a mixed bag, all in all.

VERDICT Leaves you welcoming the end when it eventually limps into view after 82 heavy minutes.

★★★★★ Jon Brown

BEYOND BORDERS

Released Out now Year 2003
Director Martin Campbell Starring Angelina Jolie

Angelina Jolie's humanitarian passions

fuel this Sirkian romance set in war-torn Ethiopia, Cambodia and Chechnya. History, if not current critical verdicts, will be kind to the *Zhivago*-esque but never less than thought-provoking love story between Clive Owen's flawed-yet-dedicated refugee-camp medic and Jolie's increasingly politicised American socialite.



EXTRAS Generous. The director's commentary, featurette on Jolie's United Nations work, a lengthy, thoughtful *Making Of* doc and interviews with Jolie, Owen, director Martin Campbell and writer Caspian Tredwell-Owen could shame anyone dismissing the film as weepy worthiness.

VERDICT Astonishing, really, that this brave, admirable look at the human cost of conflict ever made it to the big screen.

★★★★★ Jennifer Nine

OUR HOUSE

Released September 6 Year 2003
Director Danny DeVito Starring Ben Stiller

Released as Duplex Stateside, Danny DeVito's dark farce tanked at the US box-office despite boasting the combined star wattage of Ben Stiller and Drew Barrymore. Perhaps it's not surprising: while Stiller is in his element as the stay-at-home writer tormented to exasperated distraction by a geriatric Irish lodger (Eileen Essel), Drew has to tap into reservoirs of enmity and selfishness entirely alien to her sunny disposition. DeVito's glee at seeing these smug marrieds brought down a peg is evident. But the film lacks the courage of its

director's convictions, going soft and gooey when it should be at its most mean-spirited. Not funny enough to succeed as a black comedy and insufficiently nasty to pass muster as a gross-out romp.

EXTRAS Three deleted scenes and a skimpy behind-the-scenes featurette that gives away the ending.

VERDICT This good-looking property is built on shaky foundations.

★★★★★ Neil Smith

THE CROW: SALVATION

Released August 30 Year 2000
Director Bharat Nalluri Starring Kirsten Dunst

Kirsten Dunst – now there's somebody who doesn't have trouble paying her council tax. But maybe life wasn't always this easy. What else could explain her decision to appear in this thoroughly uncalled-for second sequel to 1994's cult comic crossover? Perhaps she was limbering up for future superhero glory by playing the sister of *The Crow's* dead girlfriend and helping the ass-kicking zombie (Eric Mabius) find the killer. Director Bharat Nalluri certainly drags her through the wringer, assailing her with unbelievably dumb dialogue.

EXTRAS Production design, behind-the-scenes and make-up features aplenty. If you're a goth, you'll dig it as much as your new purple mascara.

VERDICT It may be better than *Crow 2*, but what kind of achievement is that?

★★★★★ Danny Scott



WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON!

Released August 30 Year 2004

Director Robert Luketic Starring Kate Bosworth

Junior Hollywood royalty collides with West Virginia hickette in a slick-but-sweet slushfest from *Legally Blonde* helmer Robert Luketic. Scrubs-up-nicely Rosalee (a chipmunk-cheeked Kate Bosworth) wins a competition that gifts her a dream date with A-list hottie Tad Hamilton (Josh Duhamel from TV's *Las Vegas*). Shag-happy bad boy Tad falls for Rosalee's downhome goodness bigtime and follows her back to the sticks. Trouble is, her nerdy best mate Pete (Topher Grace) wants a slice of the same all-American pie... Can you guess where this is going? Of course you can. But Bosworth and Duhamel make getting there fun. Remember, ladies: "Guard your carnal treasure!"

EXTRAS A dishcloth-limp gag reel and some pointless deleted scenes. Cool day-glo teen-diary menus, though.

VERDICT Luketic's confident direction and shiny visuals mean the whole predict-o-rama is always easy on the eye

★★★★★ Cassie Whittell



THE HUMAN STAIN

Released August 23 Year 2003

Director Robert Benton Starring Nicole Kidman, Anthony Hopkins

Philip Roth's multi-layered novel of racism, political correctness, twisted family relationships and inter-generational romance would make a wonderful mini-series. Shoehorned into a 106-minute melodrama, with Nicole Kidman and Anthony Hopkins getting self-conscious and serious as the doomed protagonists, it's as densely packed as Sir Tony's waistband. Hopkins plays Coleman Silk, a disgraced professor with a dark secret, while Kidman is Faunia Farley, an abused trailer-trash janitor (yes, really). The circumstances of both contain elements of high tragedy and explain why they're drawn into an affair. A middlebrow mess.

EXTRAS A tribute to cinematographer Jean-Yves Escoffier, who died during post-production, and a self-congratulatory featurette in which we learn that Nicole can go beyond acting



into a place called "life itself". You mean the place where the rest of us live?

VERDICT Lingers too long on the sorrow, rarely adding any lightness or laughter to lift the stultifying, portentous atmosphere.

★★★★★ Jonathan Wright

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE

Released Out now Year 2003

Director T. Vinterberg Starring Joaquin Phoenix

A wistful sense of melancholy pervades Thomas Vinterberg's much-criticised, 2021-set follow-up to his *Dogma* film *Festen*. We're told right off the bat that the main character has seven days to live, lending a sure sadness to the tale of a divorcing couple (Joaquin Phoenix and Claire Danes) who realise they love each other in a world gone awry. Sadly, much of the director's musing on modern life feels airily pretentious, while Sean Penn's accented cameo is a big no-no. But there's enough that's mournful and moving here to suck you in: the choral score, the winning Phoenix and Vinterberg's lush, luminous helming.

EXTRAS Short but sweet interviews with the charming Phoenix, wry Douglas Henshall and a frankly robotic Danes. Elsewhere, co-writer Mogens Rukov offers a blunt contrast to Vinterberg on an illuminating commentary.

VERDICT A folly? Yes, but ultimately a completely fascinating one.

★★★★★ Kevin Harley



THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

Released Out now Year 2004

Director Luke Greenfield Starring Elisha Cuthbert

It's every guy's wet dream: the hottie who's moved in next door is actually an ex-porn star who isn't afraid to undress

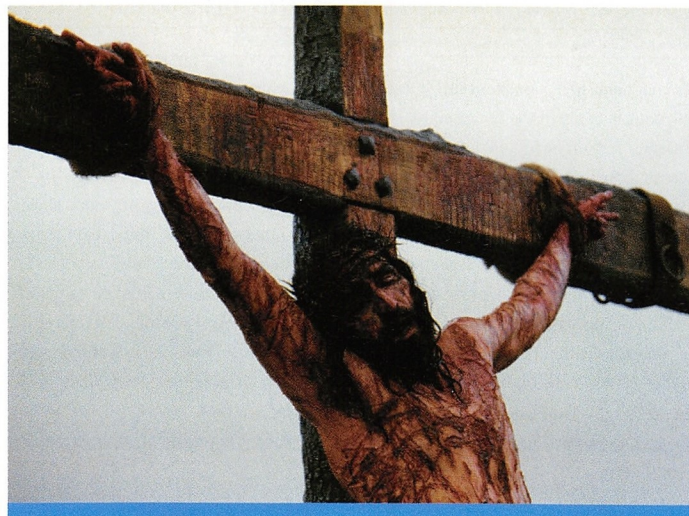
with her bedroom curtains wide open. It's time for boys to drop their socks and grab their cocks, then – especially if you're nerdy Matt (Emile Hirsch), the star of Luke Greenfield's high-school-flick-cum-sex-comedy. 24's Elisha Cuthbert is oh-so-mmm as starlet Danielle, but it's Timothy Olyphant who's standout as the insane former pimp who wants her back on screen at any cost. As a ham-fisted leer at the pornography industry, it leaves a bad taste. Ahem. Those who enjoyed it first time around will revel in the plentiful extras and those who worship Cuthbert (and have every season of 24 on tape for 'repeat viewings') will delight in the perfect freeze frame opportunities that the DVD format allows. Of course, you get to see boobies. And a porn convention. If you're male and aged 21 or under, buying this is an obvious no-brainer.



EXTRAS A sizeable package. Cuthbert giggles dirtily through her scene-specific yak, while helmer Greenfield gabs about soundtrack choices on his. We also get deleted scenes, a gag reel and a doc on the Las Vegas Adult Film convention that reveals very little apart from a lot of T&A. But then, what did you expect? An intellectual lecture in erotica?

VERDICT Works well as a modern-day riff on robo-sexpot fave *Weird Science*. Adolescent perverts will love it.

★★★★★ Cassie Whittell



THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

It's the second coming for Mel Gibson's cruci-fiction...

Released August 31 Year 2004 Director Mel Gibson Starring Jim Caviezel

Now the contrived controversy about Mel Gibson's gore-splattered version of Christ's final hours has died away, let's ask the question. The film may be bloody, but is it any bloody good? Well, it's certainly different. The 'passion' of the title doesn't refer to Christ's love of teaching or his humanity, but to his suffering. Gibbo, it seems, doesn't want to tell a story of a life so much as record a death. (If you want backstory, read the Bible.) Jesus suffered and died for humanity's sins, this film screams. Here's how much he suffered and just how horrible that death was. As an unsettling illustration for the faithful, it works. But as a movie, it stutters. The technical expertise and attention to period detail are impressive, but where's the heart? Mel is so concerned with showing the hellish exterior that he never offers a glimpse of the heavenly man within. As a result, Jim Caviezel's Christ is as distant as a figure carved on a cross.

EXTRAS Nothing. Though you can watch it just in Latin as Mr Mel originally intended.

VERDICT The last temptation of the DVD watcher? To use the fast-forward button to speed up his sloooooo trudge towards crucifixion.

★★★★★ Ceri Thomas

BOYZ N THE HOOD SPECIAL EDITION

Released Out Now Year 1991

Director John Singleton Starring Ice Cube

Writer-director John Singleton's emotive investment in his debut feature is so emphatic you wonder how he ever wound up making *2 Fast 2 Furious*. It's quite a comedown. Still, his 1991 drama remains such a powerhouse hybrid of toughened-up teen movie, muscular melodrama, Western and urban realism that it leaves no doubt as to why he made so big an initial splash. Set in South Central LA, *Boyz In The Hood* follows an African-American boy, Tre Styles (Cuba Gooding Jr), after his mother sends him to live with his father, Furious (a superb Larry Fishburne), out of fear for his future in a tough, crack-ravaged locale. Furious does the right thing by his boy, but after police harassment and acts of obscene violence, Tre finds the straight and narrow that bit too narrow...

These rites-of-passage foundations may be basic – hell, you can even see hints of *Stand By Me* here but Singleton gives *Boyz In The Hood* momentum and focus, as well as a vivid take on place, character and the tensions between them. The film rocket-powered the careers of Fishburne, Angela Bassett, Cuba Gooding Jr and Ice Cube too, and you can see why: they're as committed as a cast gets. In fact, the chemistry clicks so surely that even the odd preachy lapse feels potent.

EXTRAS The deleted scenes, trailers and music videos are run of the mill, but there's good stuff here. The 45-minute documentary, *Making Of An Urban Legend*, is no mere puff piece, being fluffy-free and full of persuasive, passionate contributions from all the key players.

VERDICT As fierce, relentless and harrowing as anything to come out of



the mouth of West Coast gangsta rappers in the past decade.

★★★★★ Kevin Harley

ZATOICHI

Released 26 July Year 2003

Director Takeshi Kitano Starring Takeshi Kitano

Bored by *The Last Samurai*'s saggy stoicism? Not impressed by *Kill Bill*'s comic-book thrills? Then let Takeshi Kitano show you a real Samurai actioner as he stylishly reimagines a cult 60s series. In front of the camera, peroxide-blond bombshell Kitano is Zatoichi, a laconic, blind masseur with dazzling sword-skills, who mops up a 19th-century village stricken by warring gangs, two vengeful geishas and a doleful-but-deadly Ronin (Ichi The Killer's Tadanobu Asano). Behind the lens, Kitano is on auteur overdrive, pulling together an effortless interweave of slapstick comedy, subtle melancholy and – best of all – devastating violence. We're talking swordplay as sharp as anything you've seen, Zatoichi lashing out with rattlesnake speed and ferocity – cue geysers of spurting CG blood – before continuing his chuckling amble. Layering in stylistic odes to Japanese masters like Yasujiro Ozu, Kenji Mizoguchi and Akira Kurosawa while filtering it through a quirky verve all of his own, Kitano collides action into art with [literally] striking effect. Beat that.

EXTRAS A 40-minute, subtitled 'Making Of' takes us through five weeks of shooting, going behind the scenes and tracking the film's progress to its gushing reception at the Venice Film Festival.

VERDICT Lightning fast swordplay spliced with comedy, melancholy and inevitably, buckets of blood.

★★★★★ Jonathan Crocker

BLIND SHAFT

Released Out Now Year 2003

Director Yang Li Starring Qiang Li

Banned in China, director Yang Li's debut is a potent allegory of innocence and experience, mounted as a muscular thriller with a resonant context of corruption and deprivation. It's coal-black

and deadly – but it's also bracing and tough with it.

The plot sinks to a literal underworld: in China's privatised mines, two miners murder workmates, pass their deaths off as accidental and claim they were relatives in order to milk compensation funds. When they pick on the 16-year-old Fengming (Wang Baoqiang), though, his virginal innocence seems to chip at their work-weathered experience. The rest unfolds with a punchy, fatalist economy. One to make you think.

EXTRAS A trailer and promos for BBC4 and the Edinburgh Festival.

VERDICT It's dark down there, but this is clear-sighted filmmaking with a biting black twist.

★★★★★ Kevin Harley



PANIC ROOM: SPECIAL EDITION

David Fincher's lean thriller takes a three-disc overdose...

Released 19 July Director David Fincher Starring Jodie Foster Year 2003

Punch-drunk and drained after the ferociously inventive *Fight Club*, David Fincher decided to keep it simple for his painfully anticipated follow-up: jump from generation-defining, rage-fuelled, Nietzsche-on-crack classic to zero-pretensions, woman-in-peril B-movie – ducking impossible expectations of equalling his masterpiece by the smart expedient of, well, not even trying. The shoot was strenuous, the box office buoyant, the critics divided. And, like *The Game* to *Se7en*, so this taut little thriller still sits in the shadow of its pugilistic predecessor. But taken on its own terms, it's a knockout. The übermensch makes way for supermom, as Jodie Foster transforms from fragile divorcee to raging bird of prey, defending her home and offspring (Kristen Stewart) from burglars (Forest Whitaker, Dwight Yoakam, Jared Leto) who are by turns bungling and brutal.

EXTRAS "It's a lurid thriller, it's a Friday-night movie. It's not supposed to be that important," says Fincher on his blab-track, with customary wryness.

VERDICT Like pomposity-free Kubrick: pure, chilly and technically sublime. Hardly heavyweight, but a blast while it lasts.

★★★★★ Daniel Webb



GAME BREAKER

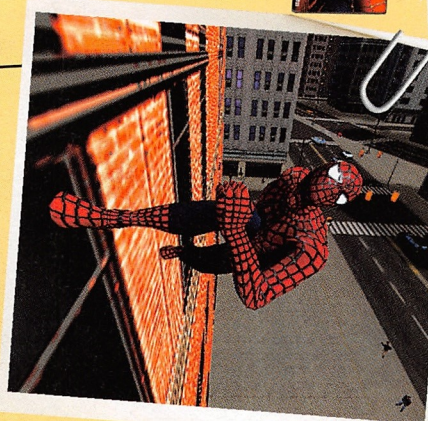
■ Delivering the best tips and cheats for the biggest games every month.

Cheats of the Month

SPIDER-MAN 2

Enter HCRAYERT as a new player name and you'll unlock tons of Spidey goodies including:

Swing speed and web zip upgrades; Big Game Hunter, Alien Buster, Shock Absorber and Tentacle Wrangler ranks and 201,000 Hero points. Additionally, the game will be 40% complete.



MASHED



Push the following combination on the D-Pad at any menu screen:

UNLOCK LEVELS
 ↑, →, ↓,
 ←, ↑, ←, ↓,
 →, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓

DRIV3R

Loads of cheats for the bollocks sequel, so let's get cracking. A sound will confirm you've entered each cheat correctly at the main menu.

ALL WEAPONS

R1, L2, ■, ●, R1, R2, L2

IMMUNITY FROM COPS

●, ●, L1, L2, R1, R2, ■

INVINCIBILITY (DOESN'T WORK IN STORY MODE)

■, ■, L1, R1, L1, R2, R2

UNLOCK ALL MISSIONS

L1, R1, L1, L2, ■, ■, ●

UNLOCK ALL VEHICLES

L1, L1, ■, ●, L1, R1, ●

To unlock hidden cars, find the following garages and enter the cars in Take A Ride mode.

FORD GT-40

Garage of last house on road to the side of the

middle bridge (short dead end road).

HOT ROD

Firestation at the airport in Nice, past the runway on the side closest to the roads.

VW VAN

Go to the spot on the map where there are two roads in a circle. Drive to the top of the small hill with streets going up and go down the ramp. Open the grey/black garage door to the right of the ramp.



To unlock these other hidden bonuses, complete the following challenges.

18 WHEELER HAVOC

Kill all 10 Timmy Vercellis in Miami. Go to the Miami armoury to the 18 Wheeler Havoc option.

FUGITIVE MODE (PEDESTRIANS HAVE WEAPONS)

Kill all 10 Timmy Vercellis in Nice. Go to the Miami armoury and select Fugitive mode option.

GO-KART IN MIAMI

Find the bunker entrance in the bushes behind the Biltmore hotel. Climb the stairs, kill Timmy Vercelli and hit the switch to open the gate below. Drive through the tunnel to find the Go-Kart track.

INFINITE MASS (NO DAMAGE)

Kill all 10 Timmy Vercellis in Istanbul. Go to the Istanbul armoury to the Infinite Mass option.

ISTANBUL

Beat Undercover mode.

TRANSFORMERS



The cheats just keep on coming for this underrated slice of 80s nostalgia. Enter these at the Difficulty Select screen to skip straight to a boss fight or the end of a level:

AMAZON BOSS FIGHT
→, →, ←, L1, R2, →, →, ←

AMAZON LEVEL COMPLETE
L1, L1, L2, ■, ■, ●, R1, R2,

ANTARCTICA BOSS FIGHT
L1, ←, L2, →, ■, ■, ●, ●

ANTARCTICA LEVEL COMPLETE
R1, R1, R2, L2, L1, L1, R1, R1

MID-ATLANTIC BOSS FIGHT
L2, →, ←, ←, →, L2, L2, L2

STARSHIP BOSS FIGHT
←, ←, ■, R1, R2,
●, →, →



SHREK 2



Press Start to view the Scrapbook and enter these cheats:

BONUS GAME
(EXIT LEVEL AND GO TO BONUS)
→, ↑, ×, ●, →, ↑, ×, ●, →,
↑, ×, ●, ■, ●, ■, ●, ■, ●

LEVEL SELECT
→, ↑, ×, ●, →, ↑, ×, ●, →,
↑, ×, ●, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑

PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY



At the main menu, highlight Extra Content and press R1 to bring up the keypad so you can enter the following passwords.

SUPER PSI
456456

ALL POWERS FROM START
537893

BULLETPROOF
548975

UNLIMITED AMMO
978945

NO HEAD
987978

EXTRA MISSIONS

UP AND OVER
020615

PITFALL
05120926

TK ALLEY
090702

GEAR GAUNTLET
154684

BOTTOMLESS PIT
154897

TIP THE IDOL
428584

GNOMOTRON
456878

PSI POOL
565485

BOUNCY BOUNCY
568789

AURA POOL
659785

PANIC ROOM
76635766

GASOLINE
9442662

STOP LIGHTS
945678

EXTRA MODES

ARCADE
05051979

COOP
07041979

DARK
465486

SURVIVAL
7734206

EXTRA SKINS

BIKINI MARLENA
135454

SARA
135488

TONYA
136876

TRAINING BARRET1
196001

TRAINING BARRET2
196002

TRAINING BARRET3
196003

TRAINING BARRET4
196004

TRAINING BARRET5
196005

TRAINING BARRET6
196006

WEI LU
231324

FETISH PYRO
231644

MP1
321646

DOCK WORKER
364654

SOLDIER
365498

CLOWN GENERAL
431644

BURNED SOLDIER
454566

STEALTH NICK
456498

ASK THE BOFFIN

Your queries fed direct into the giant cranium of our resident games boffin.

WHAT A SWINE

How do I kill Pig Josh in *Red Dead Revolver*?

Robert Matthews, Newtown

BOFFIN >> Jump onto the roof that Jack is on and climb onto the shack. You can stay here to avoid Pig Josh's explosions and get a perfect view of him. Even if he sees you and tries to come up the stairs he'll probably blow himself up with his own dynamite.

TRAIN DODGE

In one of the Istanbul missions in *Driv3r*, how do I get to the bridge before the train?

Clive Davis, Rockhampton

BOFFIN >> Put your foot down immediately and keep to the left tracks to avoid a train. Ignore the person shooting at you and drive up the left side of the train to reach a bridge before the train. Keep driving until a message appears and drive onto the bridge to trigger the cut-scene.

IN NEED OF A LIFT

In *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow*, is there an easier way to infiltrate the submarine other than getting shot to bits in the lift every time?

Sean Liddle, Drummoyne

BOFFIN >> There are actually two ways. If you do take the lift you'll have to snipe guards in the top right corner at the end of the room, through the window to your right, and another one down and to your right. Alternatively, activate the lift but don't get in. Instead, drop down onto a cable below and zip as far as you can. While hanging you can shoot the guards from there before dropping to the catwalk below.



Classic game
cheats dug up
and dusted down!

TENCHU WRATH OF HEAVEN

This stealth action title's well worth a replay, especially with these cheats to make slitting throats that little bit easier.

ALL MULTIPLAYER STAGES & MISSIONS

At multiplayer select screen in versus or co-op mode press L1, R1, L2, R2, →, ■, L3, R3 [Press down on Dual Shock sticks].

INCREASE ITEMS

At the Item Selection Screen hold down R2 + L2 and press ■, ■, ■, ↑, ←, ↓, →.

INCREASE KANJI LEVEL

During gameplay, press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ■, ■, ■, on the second controller.

RESTORE HEALTH

Pause game and press ↑, ↓, →, ←, ■, ■, ■.



SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN

Want to unlock some extra weapons? You'll need our help.

93R

Complete all objectives for all Carthage missions.

CHINA TYPE 67

Complete all objectives for Kyrgystan, Toyko, and Myanmar.

CZ MACH-9

Complete all objectives for Minsk.

DESERT EXPRESS .50

Complete all objectives for Budva and Ukraine.

DESERT SNIPER .44

Complete all objectives for Yemen1 and Yemen2.

G 53

Complete all objectives for Zurich.



HITMAN: CONTRACTS



More unlockable boomsticks, this time for the rather tasty assassin sim.

AK 74 SILENCED ASSAULT RIFLE

Receive Silent Assassin Rating in Mission 9.

CZ 2000 DUAL PISTOLS

Receive Silent Assassin Rating in Mission 1.

GK 17 DUAL PISTOLS

Receive Silent Assassin Rating in Mission 10.

M4 CARBINE SILENCED ASSAULT RIFLE

Receive Silent Assassin Rating in Mission 6.



MAGNUM 500 DUAL PISTOLS

Receive Silent Assassin Rating in Mission 4.

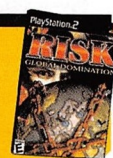
MICRO UZI DUAL SUBMACHINEGUNS

Receive Silent Assassin Rating in Mission 2.

MP5 SILENCED SUBMACHINE GUN

Receive Silent Assassin Rating in Mission 8.

RISK



There are rewards for playing this console-bound boardgame above and beyond the satisfaction of ruling the world. Check these bonuses out.

SPIKY DICE

Beaten each of the 11 generals to win a game.

WOODEN DICE

Make 500 career kills.

IRON STONEWALL MEDAL

Force a retreat from an attacker with at least five more armies.

LAKSHMI BAI

Take out opponent "Robert Clive" to win the game.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Take out opponent "Catherine the Great" to win the game.

PANGERAN DIPONEGORO

Capture 100 career territories.

PONTIAC

Take out opponent "George Washington" to win the game.

SHAKA ZULU

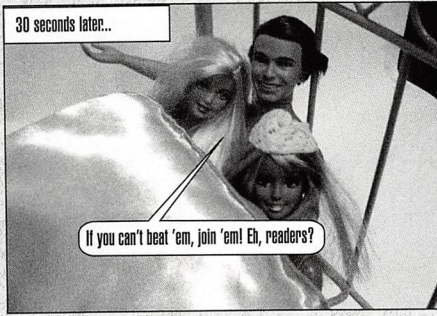
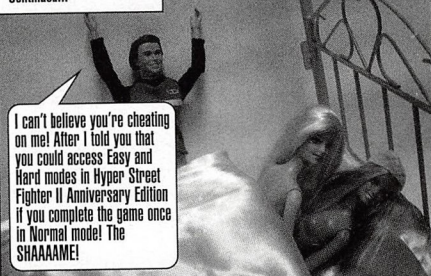
Take out opponent "Charles Gordon" to win the game.



PSW's photo casebook

Scott's bedroom bust-up

Continued...



Koei
www.koei.com

THQ

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New territories to conquer

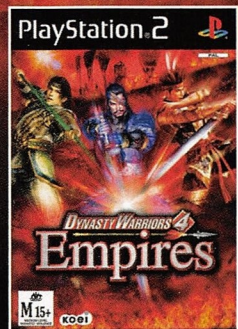


Three times the Character Edit models

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21 THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN

WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE COMES THE PAIN

Here we are, at the cusp of a new dawn in sports entertainment. In which case, it must surely be time to take one last look back at the superstars of yesteryear.



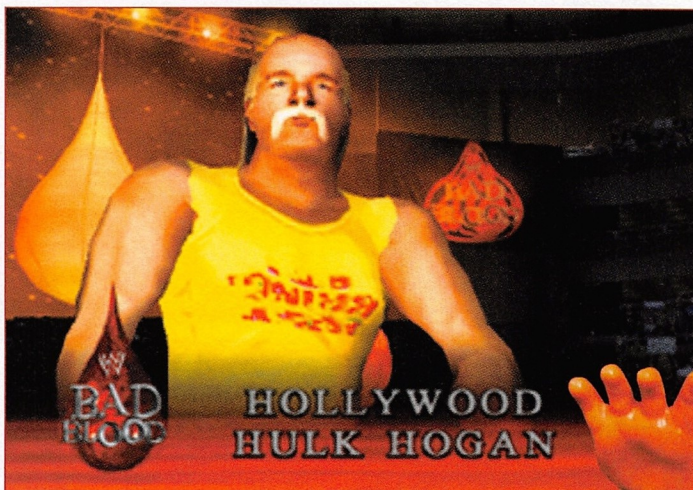
01 RIDE THE HELICOPTER

Get yourself down to Times Square (purchased from the shop for a very reasonable \$10,000) to find a huge selection of ridiculous ways of maiming and brutalising your opponent. First among the delights is jumping onto your opponent from a helicopter. Now that's what we call laying the smackdown!



02 MAKE A WIFE

If there's a character creation facility in a game then it is your LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY to fashion some kind of dream woman from the digital clay and then beat her up with a really big fat man. Failure to comply with this can lead to a large fine or even imprisonment. We've spent a little time (around seven hours) throwing together this little minx. We called her Erika and we're planning a spring wedding. Probably somewhere hot. Mmm.



03 HULKMANIA!

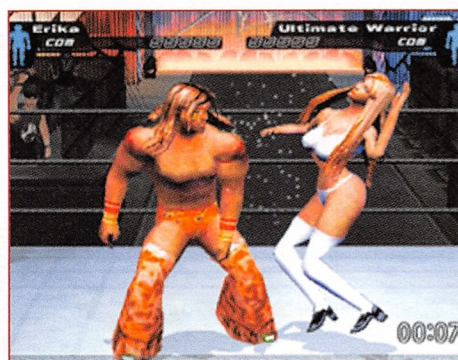
Hulk Hogan isn't just a wrestler – he's an institution. By that we don't mean he's a big building with mad people inside, we mean that he's very old. He was in Rocky III, which according to the science of Hollywood makes him at least as famous as Sylvester Stallone and Mr T. Sadly, he isn't in *WWE Smackdown! Here Comes the Pain*, an oversight that must be rectified. So here we have it.



04 FIND OUT WHO'S THE TOUGHEST

Boot up the Create-a-Wrestler function immediately and bring some friends. Spend a little time fashioning terrifyingly realistic versions of yourself and your nearest and dearest then let the computer decide who's the hardest. Just pick a one-on-one match then assign the computer to control both players. Soon, you will have absolute scientific proof of who would win in a fight.





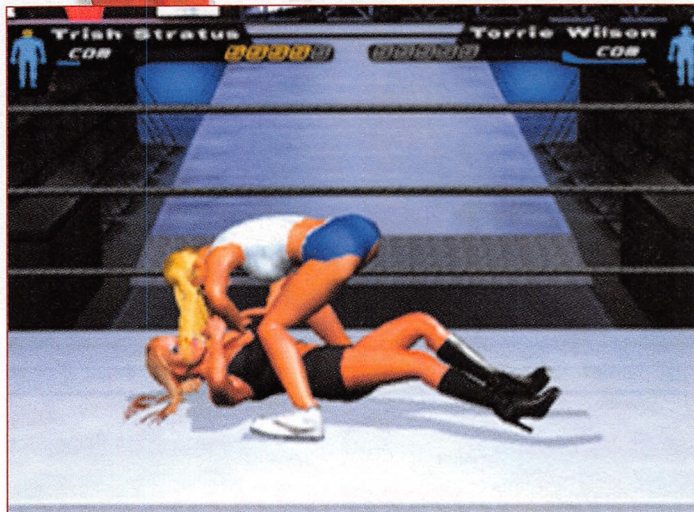
06 MAKE YOUR VERY OWN ULTIMATE WARRIOR

The greatest wrestler of all time was the Ultimate Warrior. No arguing at the back, it's just a massive fact. Due to the fact that he's over a thousand years old, he understandably failed to make the roster for *WWE Smackdown! Here Comes The Pain* so if you want him, you have to build him. We wanted him so we built him and here he is, beating our lovely wife to a bloody pulp.



05 MAKE MUTANTS FIGHT FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT

Although this sounds like an apt description of real wrestling, we're talking about the mutants you can build yourself with the Create-a-Wrestler tool. Check out these two freaks here – watching their violent cuddles made us laugh until we were sore inside.



09 STRIP YOURSELF NAKED. NAKEDISH.

Firstly, set your diva up with the Rock's 'People's Elbow' move. Then start up your Bra and Panties match and then just perform the People's Elbow. Instead of removing the elbow pad to reveal the popular elbow, your diva will instead take off her top revealing the even more popular bra. A second People's Elbow will see your lady down to her smalls and still fighting, but beware. If your opponent then tries to remove your non-existent clothes the game will crash. Take care.



07 SPOT THE HIDDEN SUPERSTARS

They might not actually feature in the game but there are plenty of wrestlers lurking in the sidelines if you know where to look. Here are some of the brawlers we've found lurking in the background:

Funaki: He can be found in Sean O' Haire's Titantron video.

Miss Jackie: She can be found in Rico's Titantron video.

Molly Holly: She can be found in Jazz's Titantron video.

Nathan Jones: He can be found in the *SmackDown!* opening video.

Spike Dudley: An animation of his head flashes in the background of the Dudley Boyz' Titantron video.

Theodore Long: He can be found in the Titantron videos of Rodney Mack and Jazz.

William Regal: He can be found in the *RAW* opening video.

08 LEARN THE SMACKDOWN SONG

Don't really do this. It would be very wrong indeed. Still, if you do want to look like a massive twat, follow these easy-to-understand instructions. As compiled by team PSW.

STEP 1: Sing this:

It's been a long time
Uh Uh, Yeah Yeah Yeah, Come on, Yeah...
You know it's my life, my time, my rights, my rhymes, my grind, my struggle...
Hustle, sweating in my blood too...

I'm ready to smell fear and I smell a lot...
My composition is fierce. I smoke, I was hot, I want it all - the access, the sex, success, I want it all - no less. Come on!

STEP 2: Ends.

10 WIN THE WOMAN'S WORLD TITLE

If you want a bash at the women's world title – and let's face it, who doesn't? – there is a way to do it, despite not being allowed to enter a woman into Season mode. All you need to do is include a self-made lady wrestler, perhaps your wife, in the season and when she comes up on the program, opt to play her matches. Win enough matches and she'll be given her shot at the title, allowing you to rule the universe as both wrestler and lady.



11 RUN A HUGE MAN OVER ON A MOTORBIKE

When you get the chance to fight in the parking lot, it's vital that you get some motorbike action on. The Undertaker's motorbike is parked out there and should you want to ride it (hint: you do) then just walk up alongside and press Square. You can also drag your opponent along for the ride if you press Circle while you're on the bike. This hurts a lot and is therefore a good thing.



"IT'S PARTIAL NUDITY FOR NORMALS AND PAIN, HUMILIATION AND SUFFERING FOR PERVERTS. BY PERVERTS WE MEAN US."

12 UP YOUR ROYAL RUMBLE RANKING

When Eric Bischoff spins the wheel for your number, and you don't like what you get, just reset the PlayStation2 and you'll get a brand new number with every new spin of the wheel. Repeat until you get the desired entry number. Probably best to save your game first, eh? This way you get to enter the ring whenever you like and rule the Royal Rumble with an iron fist. Should you have an iron fist to hand, that is.



13 BRA AND PANTIES AND BRA AND PANTIES AND BRA... AND PANTIES!

It's not like we have to explain this one to you – it's two women, nay, girls, tearing each other's clothes off. It's partial nudity for normals and pain, humiliation and suffering for perverts. By perverts, we mean us. It also gives us an excellent chance to print a great number of screens of semi-naked ladies thumping each other. That's a proposition we just can't turn down.





14 ESCAPE THE ELIMINATION CHAMBER

Find an empty chamber and climb up on the corresponding turnbuckle. Wait till an opponent comes over to have a pop at you and press forward and Triangle. You'll suddenly transport outside, behind the barrier, in with the fans. If you fail, your opponent will smack you. Best avoid that then.



15 ESCAPE THE CAGE WITHOUT WINNING

This really requires three humans to work so best dust off the Multi Tap. Play a Triple threat match and knock one character to the ground. Start dropping the dime and as you go on the apron, the third player must hit you. If you've done it right, you'll fall to the ground and be able to muck about outside.



17 GET SPECIALS FAST

Also in the gym is the treadmill. If you get on it by pressing square and then press X really fast, you'll start running. Keep running and your special bar will fill up quickly, and in no time at all you'll have full Smackdowns. Now go lay them.

18 CHEAT MASSIVELY

Play a match with interference turned on, press R3 (hold down right analog stick) to call in a mate to come and boot your opponent outta there! You must be in a stable for this to work.

19 FIND THE HIDDEN JOHN CENA VIDEO

If you sit and watch the entire credits, at the end a hidden John Cena video will play, which involves him doing a rap about the game just like that old twat Vanilla Ice.



16 STEAL YOUR OPPONENT'S FINISHING MOVE

When you have two Smackdown! icons ready and you get into your opponent's Smackdown! position, hold L2 then press L1 and you will be able to perform your opponent's finisher. "People's Elbows" all round for the lads. You'll need two Smackdown! icons to make this work, but it's worth it.



20 REVERSE A SMACKDOWN

If you press L2 and R2 at the same time as your opponent sets about laying the Smackdown! upon you, then you can reverse it. What's more, unlike the previous versions of the game, you don't need a Smackdown! icon of your own to do this. Now, that's what we call a bargain!



21 FIND THE SECRET AREA

When you're fighting in the gym, there is a wall with a crack in it. If you Irish Whip your opponent into the wall, it will crack and you'll be able to continue the fight in the ladies changing rooms.



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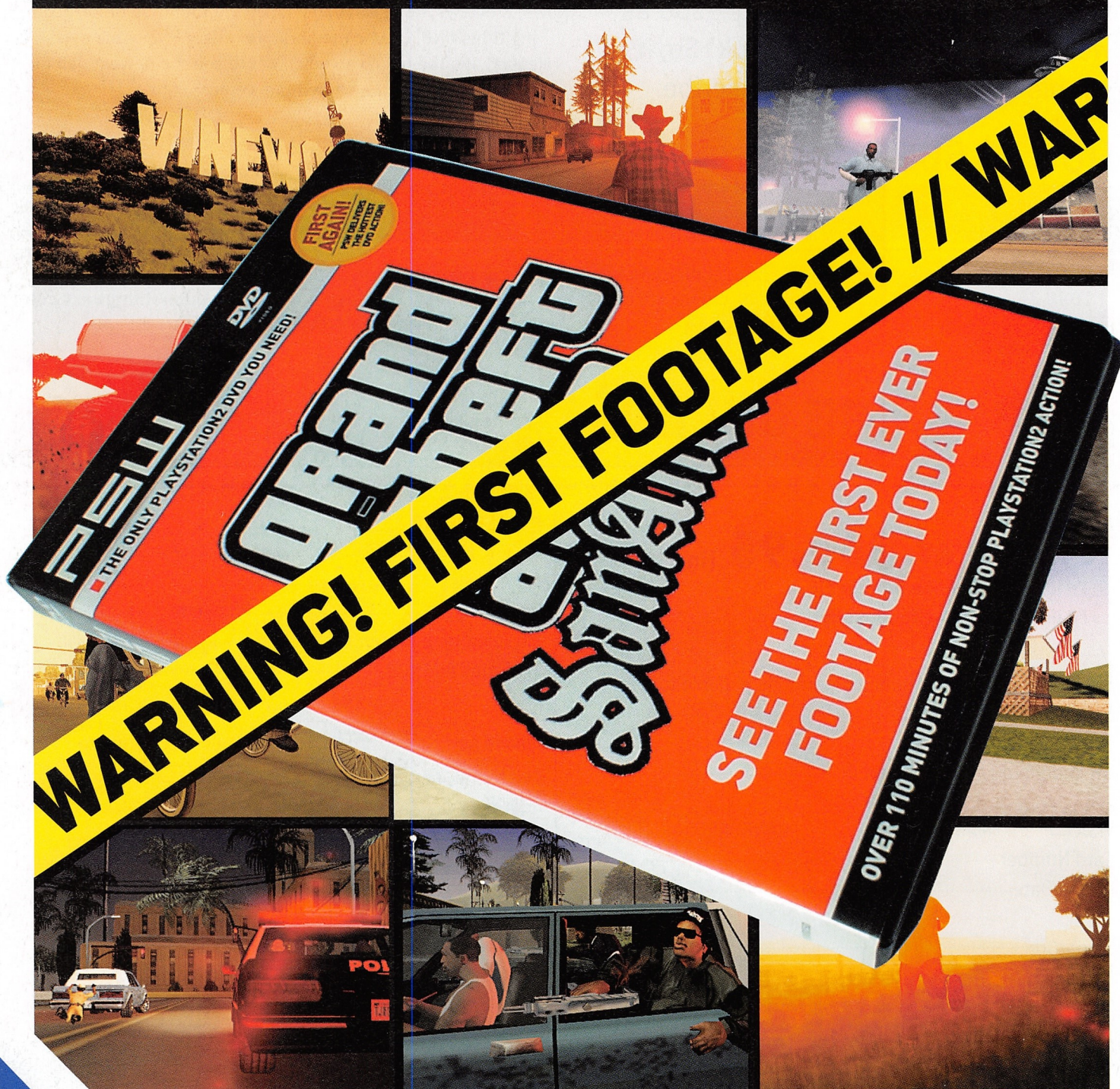
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